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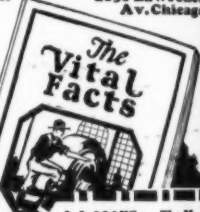
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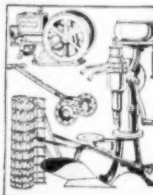
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February
1926

AINSLEE'S

STORIES THAT CHARM AND ALWAYS WILL

Vol. LVI
No. 6

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Yearly Subscription, \$2.50

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Monthly publication issued by Ainslee's Magazine Co., Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York. Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Vice President and Treasurer; George C. Smith, Jr., Vice President; Ormond V. Gould, Secretary, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Copyright, 1926, by Ainslee's Magazine Co., New York. Copyright, 1926, by Ainslee's Magazine Co., Great Britain. All Rights Reserved. Publishers everywhere are cautioned against using any of the contents of this magazine either wholly or in part. Entered as Second-class Matter, September 11, 1902, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, \$2.86. Foreign, \$3.22.

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BY

CHARLES HOUSTON



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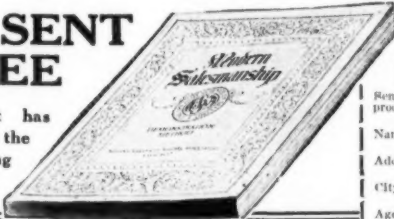
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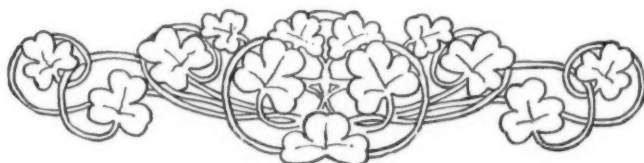
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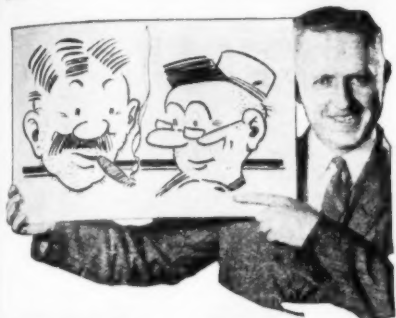
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Classified Advertising

Agents and Help Wanted

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BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. Every owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge \$1.50, make \$1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 170, East Orange, N. J.

GO INTO BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF without investing a penny. No rent to pay. No stock to carry. Yet you make bigger profits than regular storekeepers. Write for facts at once. Address Dept. 767, William C. Bartlett, Inc., 850 W. Adams Street, Chicago.

REPRESENT NATIONAL REAL ESTATE Organization in your district. Particulars upon request. Large earnings possible, experience not essential. VLC Co., 987 Union Trust Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa.

I'LL PAY YOU \$160 MONTH TAKING orders for Jennings Guaranteed Hosiery. New plan puts you above competition. Write quick for amazing offer. Jennings Co., Dept. 265, Dayton, Ohio.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. Every owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge \$1.50, make \$1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 170, East Orange, N. J.

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IF I SEND YOU A SUIT made in the latest style from the finest goods, will you keep it, wear it, and show it to your friends as a sample of my sensational \$25.00 suits guaranteed regular \$50.00 values? Could you wear \$3.00 an hour for a little spare time? If so, write me at once for my wonderful new proposition. Just write your name and address on a card and mail to Dept. 101, Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., 133 So. Peoria St., Chicago.

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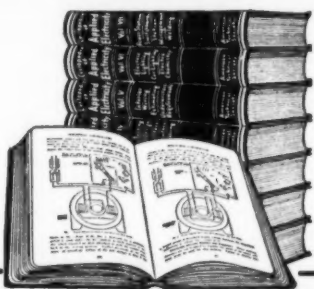
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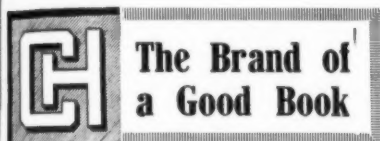
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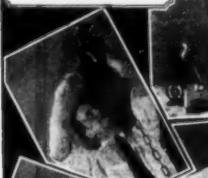


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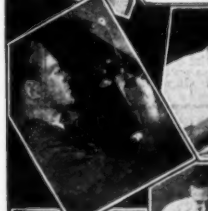
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. LVI.

FEBRUARY, 1926.

No. 6

A Complete Novel
by
W. Somerset Maugham

Author of



"The Moon and Sixpence"

RAIN

IT was nearly bedtime and when they awoke next morning land would be in sight. Doctor Macphail lit his pipe and, leaning over the rail, searched the heavens for the Southern Cross. After two years at the front and a wound that had taken longer to heal than it should, he was glad to settle down quietly at Apia for twelve months at least, and he felt already better for the journey. Since some of the passengers were leaving the ship next day at Pago-pago, they had had a little dance that evening and in his ears hammered still the harsh notes of the mechanical piano. But the deck was quiet at last. A little way off he saw his wife in a long chair talking with the Davidsons, and he strolled over to her. When he sat down under the light and took off his hat you

saw that he had very red hair, with a bald patch on the crown, and the red, freckled skin which accompanies red hair; he was a man of forty, thin, with a pinched face, precise and rather pedantic; and he spoke with a Scots accent in a very low, quiet voice.

Between the Macphails and the Davidsons, who were missionaries, there had arisen the intimacy of shipboard, which is due to propinquity rather than to any community of taste. Their chief tie was the disapproval they shared of the men who spent their days and nights in the smoking room playing poker or bridge and drinking. Mrs. Macphail was not a little flattered to think that she and her husband were the only people on board with whom the Davidsons were willing to associate, and even

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the doctor, shy but no fool, half unconsciously acknowledged the compliment. It was only because he was of an argumentative mind that in their cabin at night he permitted himself to carp.

"Mrs. Davidson was saying she didn't know how they'd have got through the journey if it hadn't been for us," said Mrs. Macphail, as she neatly brushed out her transformation. "She said we were really the only people on the ship they cared to know."

"I shouldn't have thought a missionary was such a big bug that he could afford to put on frills."

"It's not frills. I quite understand what she means. It wouldn't have been very nice for the Davidsons to have to mix with all that rough lot in the smoking room."

"The Founder of their religion wasn't so exclusive," said Doctor Macphail with a chuckle.

"I've asked you over and over again not to joke about religion," answered his wife. "I shouldn't like to have a nature like yours, Alec. You never look for the best in people."

He gave her a sidelong glance with his pale-blue eyes, but did not reply. After many years of married life he had learned that it was more conducive to peace to leave his wife with the last word. He was undressed before she was, and climbing into the upper bunk he settled down to read himself to sleep.

When he came on deck next morning they were close to land. He looked at it with greedy eyes. There was a thin strip of silver beach rising quickly to hills covered to the top with luxuriant vegetation. The coconut trees, thick and green, came nearly to the water's edge, and among them you saw the grass houses of the Samoans; and here and there, gleaming white, a little church. Mrs. Davidson came and stood beside him. She was dressed in black and wore round her neck a gold chain, from

which dangled a small cross. She was a little woman, with brown, dull hair very elaborately arranged, and she had prominent blue eyes behind invisible pince-nez. Her face was long, like a sheep's, but she gave no impression of foolishness, rather of extreme alertness; she had the quick movements of a bird. The most remarkable thing about her was her voice, high, metallic, and without inflection; it fell on the ear with a hard monotony, irritating to the nerves like the pitiless clamor of the pneumatic drill.

"This must seem like home to you," said Doctor Macphail, with his thin, difficult smile.

"Ours are low islands, you know, not like these. Coral. These are volcanic. We've got another ten days' journey to reach them."

"In these parts that's almost like being in the next street at home," said Doctor Macphail facetiously.

"Well, that's rather an exaggerated way of putting it, but one does look at distances differently in the South Seas. So far you're right."

Doctor Macphail sighed faintly.

"I'm glad we're not stationed here," she went on. "They say this is a terribly difficult place to work in. The steamers' touching makes the people unsettled; and then there's the naval station; that's bad for the natives. In our district we don't have difficulties like that to contend with. There are one or two traders, of course, but we take care to make them behave, and, if they don't, we make the place so hot for them they're glad to go."

Fixing the glasses on her nose she looked at the green island with a ruthless stare.

"It's almost a hopeless task for the missionaries here. I can never be sufficiently thankful to God that we are at least spared that."

Davidson's district consisted of a group of islands to the north of Samoa;

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they were widely separated and he had frequently to go long distances by canoe. At these times his wife remained at their headquarters and managed the mission. Doctor Macphail felt his heart sink when he considered the efficiency with which she certainly managed it. She spoke of the depravity of the natives in a voice which nothing could hush, but with a vehemently unctuous horror. Her sense of delicacy was singular. Early in their acquaintance she had said to him:

"You know, their marriage customs when we first settled in the islands were so shocking that I couldn't possibly describe them to you. But I'll tell Mrs. Macphail and she'll tell you."

Then he had seen his wife and Mrs. Davidson, their deck chairs close together, in earnest conversation for about two hours. As he walked past them backwards and forwards for the sake of exercise, he had heard Mrs. Davidson's agitated whisper, like the distant flow of a mountain torrent, and he saw by his wife's open mouth and pale face that she was enjoying an alarming experience. At night in their cabin she repeated to him with bated breath all she had heard.

"Well, what did I say to you?" cried Mrs. Davidson, exultant, next morning. "Did you ever hear anything more dreadful? You don't wonder that I couldn't tell you myself, do you? Even though you are a doctor."

But now they came to the mouth of the harbor and Mrs. Macphail joined them. The ship turned sharply and steamed slowly in. It was a great landlocked harbor big enough to hold a fleet of battleships; and all around it rose, high and steep, the green hills. Near the entrance, getting such breeze as blew from the sea, stood the governor's house in a garden. The Stars and Stripes dangled languidly from a flag-staff. They passed two or three trim bungalows, and a tennis court, and then

they came to the quay with its ware-houses. Mrs. Davidson pointed out the schooner, moored two or three hundred yards from the side, which was to take them to Apia. There was a crowd of eager, noisy, and good-humored natives come from all parts of the island, some from curiosity, others to barter with the travelers on their way to Sydney; and they brought pineapples and huge bunches of bananas, *tapa* cloths, necklaces of shells or sharks' teeth, *kava* bowls, and models of war canoes. American sailors, neat and trim, clean-shaven and frank of face, sauntered among them, and there was a little group of officials. While their luggage was being landed the Macphails and Mrs. Davidson watched the crowd. Men and women wore the *lava-lava*.

"It's a very indecent costume," said Mrs. Davidson. "Mr. Davidson thinks it should be prohibited by law. How can you expect people to be moral when they wear nothing but a strip of red cotton around their loins?"

"It's suitable enough to the climate," said the doctor, wiping the sweat off his head.

Now that they were on land the heat, though it was so early in the morning, was already oppressive. Closed in by its hills, not a breath of air came in to Pagopago.

"In our islands," Mrs. Davidson went on in her high-pitched tones, "we've practically eradicated the *lava-lava*. A few old men still continue to wear it, but that's all. The women have all taken to the Mother Hubbard, and the men wear trousers and singlets. At the very beginning of our stay Mr. Davidson said in one of his reports: 'The inhabitants of these islands will never be thoroughly Christianized till every boy of more than ten years is made to wear a pair of trousers.'"

But Mrs. Davidson had given two or three of her birdlike glances at heavy

gray clouds that came floating over the mouth of the harbor. A few drops began to fall.

"We'd better take shelter," she said.

They made their way with all the crowd to a great shed of corrugated iron, and the rain began to fall in torrents. They stood there for some time and then were joined by Mr. Davidson. He had been polite enough to the Macphails during the journey, but he had not his wife's sociability, and had spent much of his time reading. He was a silent, rather sullen man, and you felt that his affability was a duty that he imposed upon himself Christianly; he was by nature reserved and even morose. His appearance was singular. He was very tall and thin, with long limbs loosely jointed, hollow cheeks and curiously high cheek bones; he had so cadaverous an air that it surprised you to notice how full and sensual were his lips. He wore his hair very long. His dark eyes, set deep in their sockets, were large and tragic; and his hands with their big, long fingers, were finely shaped; they gave him a look of great strength. But the most striking thing about him was the feeling he gave you of suppressed fire. It was impressive and vaguely troubling. He was not a man with whom any intimacy was possible.

He brought now unwelcome news. There was an epidemic of measles, a serious and often fatal disease among the Kanakas, on the island, and a case had developed among the crew of the schooner which was to take them on their journey. The sick man had been brought ashore and put in hospital on the quarantine station, but telegraphic instructions had been sent from Apia to say that the schooner would not be allowed to enter the harbor till it was certain no other member of the crew was affected.

"It means we shall have to stay here for ten days at least."

"But I'm urgently needed at Apia," said Doctor Macphail.

"That can't be helped. If no more cases develop on board, the schooner will be allowed to sail with white passengers, but all native traffic is prohibited for three months."

"Is there a hotel here?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

Davidson gave a low chuckle.

"There's not."

"What shall we do then?"

"I've been talking to the governor. There's a trader along the front who has rooms that he rents, and my proposition is that as soon as the rain lets up we should go along there and see what we can do. Don't expect comfort. You've just got to be thankful if we get a bed to sleep on and a roof over our heads."

But the rain showed no sign of stopping, and at length with umbrellas and waterproofs they set out. There was no town, but merely a group of official buildings, a store or two, and at the back, among the coconut trees and plantains, a few native dwellings. The house they sought was about five minutes' walk from the wharf. It was a frame house of two stories, with broad verandas on both floors and a roof of corrugated iron. The owner was a half-caste named Horn, with a native wife surrounded by little brown children, and on the ground floor he had a store where he sold canned goods and cottons. The rooms he showed them were almost bare of furniture. In the Macphails' there was nothing but a poor, worn bed with a ragged mosquito net, a rickety chair, and a washstand. They looked round with dismay. The rain poured down without ceasing.

"I'm not going to unpack more than we actually need," said Mrs. Macphail.

Mrs. Davidson came into the room as she was unlocking a portmanteau. She was very brisk and alert. The cheerless surroundings had no effect on her.

"Dinner's at one. Doctor Macphail, you'd better go down to the wharf and see that your heavy luggage has been put in a dry place. You know what these natives are; they're quite capable of storing it where the rain will beat in on it all the time."

The doctor put on his waterproof again and went downstairs. At the door Mr. Horn was standing in conversation with the quartermaster of the ship they had just arrived in and a second-class passenger whom Doctor Macphail had seen several times on board. The quartermaster, a little, shriveled man, extremely dirty, nodded to him as he passed.

"This is a bad job about the measles, doc," he said. "I see you've fixed yourself up already."

Doctor Macphail thought he was rather familiar, but he was a timid man and he did not take offense easily.

"Yes, we've got a room upstairs."

"Miss Thompson was sailing with you to Apia, so I've brought her along here."

The quartermaster pointed with his thumb to the woman standing by his side. She was twenty-seven perhaps, plump, and in a coarse fashion pretty. She wore a white dress and a large white hat. Her fat calves in white cotton stockings bulged over the tops of long white boots in glacé kid. She gave Macphail an ingratiating smile.

"The feller's tryin' to soak me a dollar and a half a day for the meanest sized room," she said in a hoarse voice.

"I tell you she's a friend of mine, Jo," said the quartermaster. "She can't pay more than a dollar, and you've sure got to take her for that."

The trader was fat and smooth and quietly smiling.

"Well, if you put it like that, Mr. Swan, I'll see what I can do about it. I'll talk to Mrs. Horn and if we think we can make a reduction, we will."

"Don't try to pull that stuff with me," said Miss Thompson. "We'll settle this

right now. You get a dollar a day for the room and not one bean more."

Doctor Macphail smiled. He admired the effrontery with which she bargained. He was the sort of man who always paid what he was asked. He preferred to be overcharged than to haggle. The trader sighed.

"Well, to oblige Mr. Swan I'll take it."

"That's the goods," said Miss Thompson. "Come right in and have a shot of hooch. I've got some real good rye in that grip if you'll bring it along, Mr. Swan. You come along too, doctor."

"Oh, I don't think I will, thank you," he answered. "I'm just going down to see that our luggage is all right."

He stepped out into the rain. It swept in from the opening of the harbor in sheets and the opposite shore was all blurred. He passed two of three natives clad in nothing but the *lava-lava*, with huge umbrellas over them. They walked finely, with leisurely movements, very upright; and they smiled and greeted him in a strange tongue as they went by.

It was nearly dinner time when he got back, and their meal was laid in the trader's parlor. It was a room designed not to live in but for purposes of prestige, and it had a musty, melancholy air. A suite of stamped plush was arranged neatly round the walls, and from the middle of the ceiling, protected from the flies by yellow tissue paper, hung a gilt chandelier. Davidson did not come.

"I know he went to call on the governor," said Mrs. Davidson, "and I guess he's kept him to dinner."

A little native girl brought them a dish of Hamburger steak, and after a while the trader came up to see that they had everything they wanted.

"I see we have a fellow lodger, Mr. Horn," said Doctor Macphail.

"She's taken a room, that's all," answered the trader. "She's getting her own board."

He looked at the two ladies with an obsequious air.

"I put her downstairs so she shouldn't be in the way. She won't be any trouble to you."

"Is it some one who was on the boat?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

"Yes, ma'am, she was in the second cabin. She was going to Apia. She has a position as cashier waiting for her."

"Oh!"

When the trader was gone Macphail said:

"I shouldn't think she'd find it exactly cheerful having her meals in her room."

"If she was in the second cabin, I guess she'd rather," answered Mrs. Davidson. "I don't exactly know who it can be."

"I happened to be there when the quartermaster brought her along. Her name's Thompson."

"It's not the woman who was dancing with the quartermaster last night?" asked Mrs. Davidson.

"That's who it must be," said Mrs. Macphail. "I wondered at the time what she was. She looked rather fast to me."

"Not good style at all," said Mrs. Davidson.

They began to talk of other things, and after dinner, tired with their early rise, they separated and slept. When they awoke, though the sky was still gray and the clouds hung low, it was not raining and they went for a walk on the high road which the Americans had built along the bay.

On their return they found that Davidson had just come in.

"We may be here for a fortnight," he said irritably. "I've argued it out with the governor, but he says there is nothing to be done."

"Mr. Davidson's just longing to get back to his work," said his wife, with an anxious glance at him.

"We've been away for a year," he said, walking up and down the veranda.

"The mission has been in charge of native missionaries and I'm terribly nervous that they've let things slide. They're good men, I'm not saying a word against them, God-fearing, devout, and truly Christian men—their Christianity would put many so-called Christians at home to the blush—but they're pitifully lacking in energy. They can make a stand once, they can make a stand twice, but they can't make a stand all the time. If you leave a mission in charge of a native missionary, no matter how trustworthy he seems, in course of time you'll find he's let abuses creep in."

Mr. Davidson stood still. With his tall, spare form, and his great eyes flashing out of his pale face, he was an impressive figure. His sincerity was obvious in the fire of his gestures and in his deep, ringing voice.

"I expect to have my work cut out for me. I shall act and I shall act promptly. If the tree is rotten it shall be cut down and cast into the flames."

And in the evening after the high tea which was their last meal, while they sat in the stiff parlor, the ladies working and Doctor Macphail smoking his pipe, the missionary told them of his work in the islands.

"When we went there they had no sense of sin at all," he said. "They broke the commandments one after the other and never knew they were doing wrong. And I think that was the most difficult part of my work—to instill into the natives the sense of sin."

The Macphails knew already that Davidson had worked in the Solomons for five years before he met his wife. She had been a missionary in China, and they had become acquainted in Boston, where they were both spending part of their leave to attend a missionary congress. On their marriage they had been appointed to the islands in which they had labored ever since.

In the course of all the conversations they had had with Mr. Davidson one

thing had shone out clearly and that was the man's unflinching courage. He was a medical missionary, and he was liable to be called at any time to one or other of the islands in the group. Even the whaleboat is not so very safe a conveyance in the stormy Pacific of the wet season, but often he would be sent for in a canoe, and then the danger was great. In cases of illness or accident he never hesitated. A dozen times he had spent the whole night baling for his life, and more than once Mrs. Davidson had given him up for lost.

"I'd beg him not to go sometimes," she said, "or at least to wait till the weather was more settled, but he'd never listen. He's obstinate, and when he's once made up his mind, nothing can move him."

"How can I ask the natives to put their trust in the Lord if I am afraid to do so myself?" cried Davidson. "And I'm not—I'm not! They know that if they send for me in their trouble I'll come if it's humanly possible. And do you think the Lord is going to abandon me when I am on His business? The wind blows at His bidding and the waves toss and rage at His word."

Doctor Macphail was a timid man. He had never been able to get used to the hurtling of the shells over the trenches, and when he was operating in an advanced dressing station the sweat poured from his brow and dimmed his spectacles in the effort he made to control his unsteady hand. He shuddered a little as he looked at the missionary.

"I wish I could say that I've never been afraid," he said.

"I wish you could say that you believed in God," retorted the other.

But for some reason, that evening the missionary's thoughts traveled back to the early days he and his wife had spent on the islands.

"Sometimes Mrs. Davidson and I would look at one another and the tears would stream down our cheeks. We

worked without ceasing, day and night, and we seemed to make no progress. I don't know what I should have done without her then. When I felt my heart sink, when I was very near despair, she gave me courage and hope."

Mrs. Davidson looked down at her work, and a slight color rose to her thin cheeks. Her hands trembled a little. She did not trust herself to speak.

"We had no one to help us. We were alone, thousands of miles from any of our own people, surrounded by darkness. When I was broken and weary she would put her work aside and take the Bible and read to me till peace came and settled upon me like sleep upon the eyelids of a child, and when at last she closed the book she'd say: 'We'll save them in spite of themselves.' And I felt strong again in the Lord, and I answered: 'Yes, with God's help I'll save them. I must save them.'"

"You see, they were so naturally depraved that they couldn't be brought to see their wickedness. We had to make sins out of what they thought were natural actions. We had to make it a sin, not only to commit adultery and to lie and thief, but to expose their bodies, and to dance, and not to come to church. I made it a sin for a girl to show her bosom and a sin for a man not to wear trousers."

"How?" asked Doctor Macphail, not without surprise.

"I instituted fines. Obviously the only way to make people realize that an action is sinful is to punish them if they commit it. I fined them if they didn't come to church, and I fined them if they danced. I fined them if they were improperly dressed. I had a tariff, and every sin had to be paid for either in money or work. And at last I made them understand."

"But did they never refuse to pay?"

"How could they?" asked the missionary.

Doctor Macphail looked at Davidson

with troubled eyes. What he heard shocked him, but he hesitated to express his disapproval.

"You must remember that in the last resort I could expel them from their church membership."

"Did they mind that?"

Davidson smiled a little and gently rubbed his hands.

"They couldn't sell their copra. When the men fished they got no share of the catch. It meant something very like starvation. Yes, they minded quite a lot."

"Tell him about Fred Ohlson," said Mrs. Davidson.

The missionary fixed his fiery eyes on Doctor Macphail.

"Fred Ohlson was a Danish trader who had been in the islands a good many years. He was a pretty rich man as traders go and he wasn't very pleased when we came. You see, he'd had things very much his own way. He paid the natives what he liked for their copra, and he paid in goods and whisky. He had a native wife, but he was flagrantly unfaithful to her. He was a drunkard. I gave him a chance to mend his ways, but he wouldn't take it. He laughed at me."

Davidson's voice fell to a deep bass as he said the last words, and he was silent for a minute or two. The silence was heavy with menace.

"In two years he was a ruined man. He'd lost everything he'd saved in a quarter of a century. I broke him, and at last he was forced to come to me like a beggar and beseech me to give him a passage back to Sydney."

"I wish you could have seen him when he came to see Mr. Davidson," said the missionary's wife. "He had been a fine, powerful man, with a lot of fat on him, and he had a great big voice, but now he was half the size, and he was shaking all over. He'd suddenly become an old man."

With abstracted gaze Davidson looked

out into the night. The rain was falling again.

Suddenly from below came a sound, and Davidson turned and looked questioningly at his wife. It was the sound of a gramophone, harsh and loud, wheezing out a syncopated tune.

"What's that?" he asked.

Mrs. Davidson fixed her pince-nez more firmly on her nose.

"One of the second-class passengers has a room in the house. I guess it comes from there."

They listened in silence, and presently they heard the sound of dancing. Then the music stopped, and they heard the popping of corks and voices raised in animated conversation.

"I dare say she's giving a farewell party to her friends on board," said Doctor Macphail. "The ship sails at twelve, doesn't it?"

Davidson made no remark, but he looked at his watch.

"Are you ready?" he asked his wife.

She got up and folded her work.

"Yes, I guess I am," she answered.

"It's early to go to bed yet, isn't it?" said the doctor.

"We have a good deal of reading to do," exclaimed Mrs. Davidson. "Wherever we are, we read a chapter of the Bible before retiring for the night and we study it with the commentaries, you know, and discuss it thoroughly. It's a wonderful training for the mind."

The two couples bade one another good night. Doctor and Mrs. Macphail were left alone. For two or three minutes they did not speak.

"I think I'll go and fetch the cards," the doctor said at last.

Mrs. Macphail looked at him doubtfully. Her conversation with the Davidsons had left her a little uneasy, but she did not like to say that she thought they had better not play cards when the Davidsons might come in at any moment. Doctor Macphail brought them and she watched him, though with a

vague sense of guilt, while he laid out his patience. Below the sound of revelry continued.

It was fine enough next day, and the Macphails, condemned to spend a fortnight of idleness at Pagopago, set about making the best of things. They went down to the quay and got out of their boxes a number of books. The doctor called on the chief surgeon of the naval hospital and went round the beds with him. They left cards on the governor. They passed Miss Thompson on the road. The doctor took off his hat, and she gave him a "Good morning, doc," in a loud, cheerful voice. She was dressed as on the day before, in a white frock, and her shiny white boots with their high heels, her fat legs bulging over the tops of them, were strange things on that exotic scene.

"I don't think she's very suitably dressed, I must say," said Mrs. Macphail. "She looks extremely common to me."

When they got back to their house, she was on the veranda playing with one of the trader's dark children.

"Say a word to her," Doctor Macphail whispered to his wife. "She's all alone here, and it seems rather unkind to ignore her."

Mrs. Macphail was shy, but she was in the habit of doing what her husband bade her.

"I think we're fellow lodgers here," she said, rather foolishly.

"Terrible, ain't it, bein' cooped up in a one-horse burg like this?" answered Miss Thompson. "And they tell me I'm lucky to have gotten a room. I don't see myself livin' in a native house, and that's what some have to do. I don't know why they don't have a hotel."

They exchanged a few more words. Miss Thompson, loud voiced and garrulous, was evidently quite willing to gossip, but Mrs. Macphail had a poor

stock of small talk and presently she said:

"Well, I think we must go upstairs."

In the evening when they sat down to their high tea Davidson on coming in said:

"I see that woman downstairs has a couple of sailors sitting there. I wonder how she's gotten acquainted with them."

"She can't be very particular," said Mrs. Davidson.

They were all rather tired after the idle, aimless day.

"If there's going to be a fortnight of this, I don't know what we shall feel like at the end of it," said Doctor Macphail.

"The only thing to do is to portion out the day to different activities," answered the missionary. "I shall set aside a certain number of hours to study and a certain number to exercise, rain or fine—in the wet season you can't afford to pay any attention to the rain—and a certain number to recreation."

Doctor Macphail looked at his companion with misgiving. Davidson's program oppressed him. They were eating Hamburger steak again. It seemed the only dish the cook knew how to make. Then below the gramophone began. Davidson started nervously when he heard it, but said nothing. Men's voices floated up. Miss Thompson's guests were joining in a well-known song and presently they heard her voice too, hoarse and loud. There was a good deal of shouting and laughing. The four people upstairs, trying to make conversation, listened despite themselves to the clink of glasses and the scrape of chairs. More people had evidently come. Miss Thompson was giving a party.

"I wonder how she gets them all in," said Mrs. Macphail, suddenly breaking into a medical conversation between the missionary and her husband.

It showed whither her thoughts were wandering. The twitch of Davidson's

face proved that, though he spoke of scientific things, his mind was busy in the same direction. Suddenly, while the doctor was giving some experience of practice on the Flanders front, rather prosily, he sprang to his feet with a cry.

"What's the matter, Alfred?" asked Mrs. Davidson.

"Of course! It never occurred to me. She's out of Iwelei."

"She can't be."

"She came on board at Honolulu. It's obvious. And she's carrying on her trade here. Here!"

He uttered the last word with a passion of indignation.

"What's Iwelei?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

He turned his gloomy eyes on her and his voice trembled with horror.

"The plague spot of Honolulu. It was the most crying scandal of the Pacific. The missionaries had been agitating against it for years, and then the local press took it up. At last they were forced to move."

"I read about it in the papers that came on board in Honolulu," said Doctor Macphail.

"Iwelei, with its sin and shame, ceased to exist on the very day we arrived. The whole population was brought before the justices. I don't know why I didn't understand at once what that woman was."

"Now you come to speak of it," said Mrs. Macphail, "I remember seeing her come on board only a few minutes before the boat sailed. I remember thinking at the time she was cutting it rather fine."

"How dare she come here!" cried Davidson indignantly. "I'm not going to allow it."

He strode toward the door.

"What are you going to do?" asked Macphail.

"What do you expect me to do? I'm going to stop it. I'm not going to have this house turned into—into——"

He sought for a word that should not offend the ladies' ears.

"It sounds as though there were three or four men down there," said the doctor. "Don't you think it's rather rash to go in just now?"

The missionary gave him a contemptuous look and without a word flung out of the room.

"You know Mr. Davidson very little if you think the fear of personal danger can stop him in the performance of his duty," said his wife.

She sat with her hands nervously clasped, a spot of color on her high cheek bones, listening to what was about to happen below. They all listened. They heard him clatter down the wooden stairs and throw open the door. The singing stopped suddenly, but the gramophone continued to bray out its vulgar tune. They heard Davidson's voice and then the noise of something heavy falling. The music stopped. He had hurled the gramophone on the floor. Then again they heard Davidson's voice, they could not make out the words; then Miss Thompson's, loud and shrill, then a confused clamor as though several people were shouting together at the top of their lungs. Mrs. Davidson gave a little gasp, and she clenched her hands more tightly. Doctor Macphail looked uncertainly from her to his wife. He did not want to go down, but he wondered if they expected him to. Then there was something that sounded like a scuffle. The noise now was more distinct. It might be that Davidson was being thrown out of the room. The door was slammed. There was a moment's silence and they heard Davidson come up the stairs again. He went to his room.

"I think I'll go to him," said Mrs. Davidson.

She got up and went out.

"If you want me, just call," said Mrs. Macphail, and then when the other was gone: "I hope he isn't hurt."

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"Why couldn't he mind his own business?" said Doctor Macphail.

They sat in silence for a minute or two and then they both started, for the gramophone began to play once more, defiantly, and mocking voices shouted hoarsely.

Next day Mrs. Davidson was pale and tired. She complained of headache, and she looked old and wizened. She told Mrs. Macphail that the missionary had not slept at all; he had passed the night in a state of frightful agitation and at five had got up and gone out. A glass of beer had been thrown over him and his clothes were stained and stinking. But a somber fire glowed in Mrs. Davidson's eyes when she spoke of Miss Thompson.

"She'll bitterly rue the day when she flouted Mr. Davidson," she said. "Mr. Davidson has a wonderful heart and no one who is in trouble has ever gone to him without being comforted, but he has no mercy for sin, and when his righteous wrath is excited he's terrible."

"Why, what will he do?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

"I don't know, but I wouldn't stand in that creature's shoes for anything in the world."

Mrs. Macphail shuddered. There was something positively alarming in the triumphant assurance of the little woman's manner. They were going out together that morning, and they went down the stairs side by side. Miss Thompson's door was open, and they saw her in a bedraggled dressing gown, cooking something in a chafing dish.

"Good morning!" she called. "Is Mr. Davidson better this morning?"

They passed her in silence, with their noses in the air, as if she did not exist. They flushed, however, when she burst into a shout of derisive laughter. Mrs. Davidson turned on her suddenly.

"Don't you dare to speak to me," she screamed. "If you insult me, I shall have you turned out of here."

"Say, did I ask Mr. Davidson to visit with me?"

"Don't answer her," whispered Mrs. Macphail hurriedly.

They walked on till they were out of earshot.

"She's brazen, brazen!" burst from Mrs. Davidson.

Her anger almost suffocated her.

And on their way home they met her strolling toward the quay. She had all her finery on. Her great white hat with its vulgar, showy flowers was an affront. She called out cheerily to them as she went by, and a couple of American sailors who were standing there grinned as the ladies set their faces to an icy stare. They got in just before the rain began to fall again.

"I guess she'll get her fine clothes spoiled," said Mrs. Davidson with a bitter sneer.

Davidson did not come in till they were halfway through dinner. He was wet through, but he would not change. He sat, morose and silent, refusing to eat more than a mouthful, and he stared at the slanting rain. When Mrs. Davidson told him of their two encounters with Miss Thompson he did not answer. His deepening frown alone showed that he had heard.

"Don't you think we ought to make Mr. Horn turn her out of here?" asked Mrs. Davidson. "We can't allow her to insult us."

"There doesn't seem to be any other place for her to go," said Macphail.

"She can live with one of the natives."

"In weather like this a native hut must be a rather uncomfortable place to live in."

"I lived in one for years," said the missionary.

When the little native girl brought in the fried bananas which formed the sweet they had every day, Davidson turned to her.

"Ask Miss Thompson when it would

be convenient for me to see her," he said.

The girl nodded shyly and went out.

"What do you want to see her for, Alfred?" asked his wife.

"It's my duty to see her. I won't act till I've given her every chance."

"You don't know what she is. She'll insult you."

"Let her insult me. Let her spit on me. She has an immortal soul, and I must do all in my power to save it."

Mrs. Davidson's ears rang still with the girl's mocking laughter.

"She's gone too far."

"Too far for the mercy of God?"

His eyes lit up suddenly and his voice grew mellow and soft. "Never! The sinner may be deeper in sin than the depth of hell itself, but the love of the Lord Jesus can reach him still."

The girl came back with the message.

"Miss Thompson's compliments and as long as Reverend Davidson don't come in business hours she'll be glad to see him any time."

The party received it in stony silence, and Doctor Macphail quickly effaced from his lips the smile which had come upon them. He knew his wife would be vexed with him if he found Miss Thompson's effrontery amusing.

They finished the meal in silence. When it was over the two ladies got up and took their work—Mrs. Macphail was making another of the innumerable comforters which she had turned out since the beginning of the war—and the doctor lit his pipe. But Davidson remained in his chair and with abstracted eyes stared at the table. At last he got up and without a word went out of the room. They heard him go down and they heard Miss Thompson's defiant "Come in!" when he knocked at the door. He remained with her for an hour. And Doctor Macphail watched the rain. It was beginning to get on his nerves. It was not like our soft English rain that drops gently on the earth; it was un-

merciful and somehow terrible; you felt in it the malignancy of the primitive powers of nature. It did not pour, it flowed. It was like a deluge from heaven, and it rattled on the roof of corrugated iron with a steady persistence that was maddening. It seemed to have a fury of its own. And sometimes you felt that you must scream if it did not stop, and then suddenly you felt powerless, as though your bones had suddenly become soft; and you were miserable and hopeless.

Macphail turned his head when the missionary came back. The two women looked up.

"I've given her every chance. I have exhorted her to repent. She is an evil woman."

He paused, and Doctor Macphail saw his eyes darken and his pale face grow hard and stern.

"Now I shall take the whips with which the Lord Jesus drove the usurers and the money changers out of the Temple of the Most High. If she fled to the uttermost parts of the earth, I should pursue her."

With a sudden movement he turned round and strode out of the room. They heard him go downstairs again.

"What is he going to do?" asked Mrs. Macphail.

"I don't know." Mrs. Davidson took off her pince-nez and wiped them. "When he is on the Lord's work I never ask questions."

Doctor Macphail learned the first results of the missionary's activity from the half-caste trader in whose house they lodged. He stopped the doctor when he passed the store and came out to speak to him on the stoop. His fat face was worried.

"The Reverend Davidson has been at me for letting Miss Thompson have a room here," he said, "but I didn't know what she was when I rented it to her. When people come and ask if I can rent them a room, all I want to know is if

they've the money to pay for it. And she paid me for hers a week in advance."

Doctor Macphail did not want to commit himself.

"When all's said and done it's your house. We're very much obliged to you for taking us in at all."

Horn looked at him doubtfully. He was not certain yet how definitely Macphail stood on the missionary's side.

"The missionaries are in with one another," he said hesitatingly. "If they get it in for a trader, he may just as well shut up his store and quit."

"Did he want you to turn her out?"

"No, he said so long as she behaved herself he couldn't ask me to do that. He said he wanted to be just to me. I promised she shouldn't have no more visitors. I've just been and told her."

"How did she take it?"

"She gave me hell."

The trader squirmed in his old ducks. He had found Miss Thompson a rough customer.

"Oh, well, I dare say she'll get out. I don't suppose she wants to stay here if she can't have any one in."

"There's nowhere she can go, only a native house, and no native'll take her now, not now that the missionaries have got their knife in her."

Doctor Macphail looked at the falling rain.

"Well, I don't suppose it's any good waiting for it to clear up."

In the evening when they sat in the parlor Davidson talked to them of his early days at college. He had had no means and had worked his way through by doing odd jobs during the vacations. There was silence downstairs. Miss Thompson was sitting in her little room alone. But suddenly the gramophone began to play. She had set it on in defiance, to cheat her loneliness, but there was no one to sing, and it had a melancholy note. It was like a cry for help. Davidson took no notice. He was in the middle of a long anecdote

and without change of expression went on. The gramophone continued. Miss Thompson put on one reel after another. It looked as though the silence of the night were getting on her nerves. It was breathless and sultry. When the Macphails went to bed they could not sleep. They lay side by side with their eyes wide open, listening to the cruel singing of the mosquitoes outside the curtain.

"What's that?" whispered Mrs. Macphail at last.

They heard a voice, Davidson's voice, through the wooden partition. It went on with a monotonous, earnest insistence. He was praying aloud. He was praying for the soul of Miss Thompson.

Two or three days went by. Now when they passed Miss Thompson on the road she did not greet them with ironic cordiality or smile; she passed with her nose in the air, a sulky look on her painted face, frowning, as though she did not see them. The trader told Macphail that she had tried to get lodging elsewhere, but had failed. In the evening she played through the various reels of her gramophone, but the pretense of mirth was obvious now. The ragtime had a cracked, heartbroken rhythm as though it were a one-step of despair. When she began to play on Sunday Davidson sent Horn to beg her to stop at once since it was the Lord's day. The reel was taken off and the house was silent except for the steady pattering of the rain on the iron roof.

"I think she's getting a bit worked up," said the trader next day to Macphail. "She don't know what Mr. Davidson's up to and it makes her scared."

Macphail had caught a glimpse of her that morning and it struck him that her arrogant expression had changed. There was in her face a hunted look. The half-caste gave him a sidelong glance.

"I suppose you don't know what Mr. Davidson is doing about it?" he hazarded.

"No, I don't."

It was singular that Horn should ask him that question, for he also had the idea that the missionary was mysteriously at work. He had an impression that he was weaving a net around the woman, carefully, systematically, and suddenly, when everything was ready, would pull the strings tight.

"He told me to tell her," said the trader, "that, if at any time she wanted him, she only had to send and he'd come."

"What did she say when you told her that?"

"She didn't say nothing. I didn't stop. I just said what he said I was to and then I beat it. I thought she might be going to start weepin'."

"I have no doubt the loneliness is getting on her nerves," said the doctor. "And the rain—that's enough to make any one jumpy," he continued irritably. "Doesn't it ever stop in this confounded place?"

"It goes on pretty steady in the rainy season. We have three hundred inches in the year. You see, it's the shape of the bay. It seems to attract the rain from all over the Pacific."

"Damn the shape of the bay!" said the doctor.

He scratched his mosquito bite. He felt very short-tempered. When the rain stopped and the sun shone, it was like a hothouse, seething, humid, sultry, breathless, and you had a strange feeling that everything was growing with a savage violence. The natives, blithe and childlike by reputation, seemed then, with their tattooing and their dyed hair, to have something sinister in their appearance; and when they pattered along at your heels with their naked feet you looked back instinctively.

The missionary came and went. He was busy, but the Macphails did not

know what he was doing. Horn told the doctor that he saw the governor every day, and once Davidson mentioned him.

"He looks as if he had plenty of determination," he said, "but when you come down to brass tacks he has no backbone."

"I suppose that means he won't do exactly what you want," suggestedly the doctor facetiously.

The missionary did not smile.

"I want him to do what's right. It shouldn't be necessary to persuade a man to do that."

"But there may be differences of opinion about what is right."

"If a man had a gangrenous foot, would you have patience with any one who hesitated to amputate it?"

"Gangrene is a matter of fact."

"And evil?"

What Davidson had done soon appeared. The four of them had just finished their midday meal, and they had not yet separated for the siesta which the heat imposed on the ladies and on the doctor. Davidson had little patience with the slothful habit. The door was suddenly flung open and Miss Thompson came in. She looked round the room and then went up to Davidson.

"You low-down skunk, what have you been saying about me to the governor?"

She was spluttering with rage. There was a moment's pause. Then the missionary drew forward a chair.

"Won't you be seated, Miss Thompson? I've been hoping to have another talk with you."

She burst into a torrent of insult, foul and insolent. Davidson kept his grave eyes on her.

"I'm indifferent to the abuse you think fit to heap on me, Miss Thompson," he said, "but I must beg you to remember that ladies are present."

Tears by now were struggling with her anger. Her face was red and swollen as though she were choking.

"What has happened?" asked Doctor Macphail.

"A feller's just been in here and he says I gotter beat it on the next boat."

Was there a gleam in the missionary's eyes? His face remained impassive.

"You could hardly expect the governor to let you stay here under the circumstances."

"You done it," she shrieked. "You can't kid me. You done it."

"I don't want to deceive you. I urged the governor to take the only possible step consistent with his obligations."

"Why couldn't you leave me be? I wasn't doin' you no harm."

"You may be sure that, if you had, I should be the last man to resent it."

"Do you think I want to stay on in this poor imitation of a burg? I don't look no bushier, do I?"

"In that case I don't see what cause of complaint you have," he answered.

She gave an inarticulate cry of rage and flung out of the room. There was a short silence.

"It's a relief to know that the governor has acted at last," said Davidson finally. "He's a weak man and he shilly-shallied. He said she was only here for a fortnight anyway, and if she went on to Apia that was under British jurisdiction and had nothing to do with him."

The missionary sprang to his feet and strode across the room.

"It's terrible the way the men who are in authority seek to evade their responsibility. They speak as though evil that was out of sight ceased to be evil. The very existence of that woman is a scandal and it does not help matters to shift it to another of the islands. In the end I had to speak straight from the shoulder."

Davidson's brow lowered, and he protruded his firm chin. He looked fierce and determined.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Our mission is not entirely without influence at Washington. I pointed out

to the governor that it wouldn't do him any good if there was a complaint about the way he managed things here."

"When has she got to go?" asked the doctor, after a pause.

"The San Francisco boat is due here from Sydney next Tuesday. She's to sail on that."

That was in five days' time. It was next day, when he was coming back from the hospital where, for want of something better to do, Macphail spent most of his mornings, that the half-caste stopped him as he was going upstairs.

"Excuse me, Doctor Macphail. Miss Thompson's sick. Will you have a look at her?"

"Certainly."

Horn led him to her room. She was sitting in a chair idly, neither reading nor sewing, staring in front of her. She wore her white dress and the large hat with the flowers on it. Macphail noticed that her skin was yellow and muddy under her powder, and her eyes were heavy.

"I'm sorry to hear you're not well," he said.

"Oh, I ain't sick really. I just said that, because I just had to see you. I've got to clear on a boat that's going to Frisco."

She looked at him and he saw that her eyes were suddenly startled. She opened and clenched her hands spasmodically. The trader stood at the door, listening.

"So I understand," said the doctor.

She gave a little gulp.

"I guess it ain't very convenient for me to go to Frisco just now. I went to see the governor yesterday afternoon, but I couldn't get to him. I saw the secretary, and he told me I'd got to take that boat and that was all there was to it. I just had to see the governor, so I waited outside his house this morning, and when he come out I spoke to him. He didn't want to speak to me, I'll say,

but I wouldn't let him shake me off, and at last he said he hadn't no objection to my staying here till the next boat to Sydney if the Reverend Davidson will stand for it."

She stopped and looked at Doctor Macphail anxiously.

"I don't know exactly what I can do," he said.

"Well, I thought maybe you wouldn't mind asking him. I swear to God I won't start anything here if he'll just only let me stay. I won't go out of the house if that'll suit him. It's no more'n a fortnight."

"I'll ask him."

"He won't stand for it," said Horn. "He'll have you out on Tuesday, so you may as well make up your mind to it."

"Tell him I can get work in Sydney—straight stuff, I mean. 'Tain't asking very much."

"I'll do what I can."

"And come and tell me right away, will you? I can't set down to a thing till I get the dope one way or the other."

It was not an errand that much pleased the doctor, and, characteristically perhaps, he went about it indirectly. He told his wife what Miss Thompson had said to him and asked her to speak to Mrs. Davidson. The missionary's attitude seemed rather arbitrary and it could do no harm if the girl were allowed to stay in Pagopago another fortnight. But he was not prepared for the result of his diplomacy. The missionary came to him straightway.

"Mrs. Davidson tells me that Thompson has been speaking to you."

Doctor Macphail, thus directly tackled, had the shy man's resentment at being forced out into the open. He felt his temper rising, and he flushed.

"I don't see that it can make any difference if she goes to Sydney rather than to San Francisco, and so long as she promises to behave while she's here it's dashed hard to persecute her."

The missionary fixed him with his stern eyes.

"Why is she unwilling to go back to San Francisco?"

"I didn't inquire," answered the doctor with some asperity. "And I think one does better to mind one's own business."

"The governor has ordered her to be deported by the first boat that leaves the island. He's only done his duty and I will not interfere. Her presence is a peril here."

"I think you're very harsh and tyrannical."

The two ladies looked up at the doctor with some alarm, but they need not have feared a quarrel, for the missionary smiled gently.

"I'm terribly sorry you should think that of me, Doctor Macphail. Believe me, my heart bleeds for that unfortunate woman, but I'm only trying to do my duty."

The doctor made no answer. He looked out of the window sullenly. For once it was not raining and across the bay you saw nestling among the trees the huts of a native village.

"I think I'll take advantage of the rain stopping to go out," he said.

"Please don't bear me malice because I can't accede to your wish," said Davidson, with a melancholy smile. "I respect you very much, doctor, and I should be sorry if you thought ill of me."

"I have no doubt you have a sufficiently good opinion of yourself to bear mine with equanimity," he retorted.

"That's one on me," chuckled Davidson.

When Doctor Macphail, vexed with himself because he had been uncivil to no purpose, went downstairs, Miss Thompson was waiting for him with her door ajar.

"Well," she said, "have you spoken to him?"

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thing," he answered, not looking at her in his embarrassment.

But then he gave her a quick glance, for a sob broke from her. He saw that her face was white with fear. It gave him a shock of dismay. And suddenly he had an idea.

"But don't give up hope yet. I think it's a shame the way they're treating you and I'm going to see the governor myself."

"Now?"

He nodded. Her face brightened.

"Say, that's real good of you. I'm sure he'll let me stay if you speak for me. I just won't do a thing I didn't ought all the time I'm here."

Doctor Macphail hardly knew why he had made up his mind to appeal to the governor. He was perfectly indifferent to Miss Thompson's affairs, but the missionary had irritated him, and with him temper was a smoldering thing. He found the governor at home. He was a large, handsome man, a sailor, with a gray toothbrush mustache; and he wore a spotless uniform of white drill.

"I've come to see you about a woman who's lodging in the same house as we are," he said. "Her name's Thompson."

"I guess I've heard nearly enough about her, Doctor Macphail," said the governor, smiling. "I've given her the order to get out next Tuesday and that's all I can do."

"I wanted to ask you if you couldn't stretch a point and let her stay here till the boat comes in from San Francisco so that she can go to Sydney. I will guarantee her good behavior."

The governor continued to smile, but his eyes grew small and serious.

"I'd be very glad to oblige you, Doctor Macphail, but I've given the order and it must stand."

The doctor put the case as reasonably as he could, but now the governor ceased to smile at all. He listened sullenly, with averted gaze. Macphail saw that he was making no impression.

"I'm sorry to cause any lady inconvenience, but she'll have to sail on Tuesday and that's all there is to it."

"But what difference can it make?"

"Pardon me, doctor, but I don't feel called upon to explain my official actions except to the proper authorities."

Macphail looked at him shrewdly. He remembered Davidson's hint that he had used threats, and in the governor's attitude he read a singular embarrassment.

"Davidson's a damned busybody," he said hotly.

"Between ourselves, Doctor Macphail, I don't say that I have formed a very favorable opinion of Mr. Davidson, but I am bound to confess that he was within his rights in pointing out to me the danger that the presence of a woman of Miss Thompson's character was to a place like this where a number of enlisted men are stationed among a native population."

He got up and Doctor Macphail was obliged to do so, too.

"I must ask you to excuse me. I have an engagement. Please give my respects to Mrs. Macphail."

The doctor left him, crestfallen. He knew that Miss Thompson would be waiting for him, and unwilling to tell her himself that he had failed, he went into the house by the back door and sneaked up the stairs as though he had something to hide.

At supper he was silent and ill at ease, but the missionary was jovial and animated. Doctor Macphail thought his eyes rested on him now and then with triumphant good-humor. It struck him suddenly that Davidson knew of his visit to the governor and of its ill success. But how on earth could he have heard of it? There was something sinister about the power of that man. After supper he saw Horn on the veranda and, as though to have a casual word with him, went out.

"She wants to know if you've seen the governor," the trader whispered.

"Yes. He wouldn't do anything. I'm awfully sorry, I can't do anything more."

"I knew he wouldn't. They daren't go against the missionaries."

"What are you talking about?" said Davidson affably, coming out to join them.

"I was just saying there was no chance of your getting over to Apia for at least another week," said the trader glibly.

He left them, and the two men returned into the parlor. Mr. Davidson devoted one hour after each meal to recreation. Presently a timid knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said Mrs. Davidson, in her sharp voice.

The door was not opened. She got up and opened it. They saw Miss Thompson standing at the threshold. But the change in her appearance was extraordinary. This was no longer the flaunting hussy who had jeered at them in the road, but a broken, frightened woman. Her hair, as a rule so elaborately arranged, was tumbling untidily over her neck. She wore bedroom slippers and a skirt and blouse. They were unfresh and bedraggled. She stood at the door with the tears streaming down her face and did not dare to enter.

"What do you want?" said Mrs. Davidson harshly.

"May I speak to Mr. Davidson?" she said in a choking voice.

The missionary rose and went toward her.

"Come right in, Miss Thompson," he said in cordial tones. "What can I do for you?"

She entered the room.

"Say, I'm sorry for what I said to you the other day an' for—for everythin' else. I guess I was a bit lit up. I beg pardon."

"Oh, it was nothing. I guess my

back's broad enough to bear a few harsh words."

She stepped toward him with a movement that was horribly cringing.

"You've got me beat. I'm all in. You won't make me go back to Frisco?"

His genial manner vanished and his voice grew on a sudden hard and stern.

"Why don't you want to go back there?"

She cowered before him.

"I guess my people live there. I don't want them to see me like this. I'll go anywhere else you say."

"Why don't you want to go back to San Francisco?"

"I've told you."

He leaned forward, staring at her, and his great, shining eyes seemed to try to bore into her soul. He gave a sudden gasp.

"The penitentiary!"

She screamed, and then she fell at his feet, clasping his legs.

"Don't send me back there. I swear o you before God I'll be a good woman. I'll give all this up."

She burst into a torrent of confused supplication and the tears coursed down her painted cheeks. He leaned over her and, lifting her face, forced her to look at him.

"Is that it—the penitentiary?"

"I beat it before they could get me," she gasped. "If the bulls grab me, it's three years for mine."

He let go his hold of her and she fell in a heap on the floor, sobbing bitterly. Doctor Macphail stood up.

"This alters the whole thing," he said. "You can't make her go back when you know this. Give her another chance. She wants to turn over a new leaf."

"I'm going to give her the finest chance she's ever had. If she repents, let her accept her punishment."

She misunderstood the words and looked up. There was a gleam of hope in her heavy eyes.

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"No. You shall sail for San Francisco on Tuesday."

She gave a groan of horror and then burst into low, hoarse shrieks which sounded hardly human, and she beat her head passionately on the ground. Doctor Macphail sprang to her and lifted her up.

"Come on, you mustn't do that! You'd better go to your room and lie down. I'll get you something."

He raised her to her feet and partly dragging her, partly carrying her, got her downstairs. He was furious with Mrs. Davidson and with his wife because they made no effort to help. The half-caste was standing on the landing and with his assistance he managed to get her on the bed. She was moaning and crying. She was almost insensible. He gave her a hypodermic injection. He was hot and exhausted when he went upstairs again.

"I've got her to lie down."

The two women and Davidson were in the same positions as when he had left them. They could not have moved or spoken since he went.

"I was waiting for you," said Davidson, in a strange, distant voice. "I want you all to pray with me for the soul of our erring sister."

He took the Bible off a shelf, and sat down at the table at which they had supped. It had not been cleared, and he pushed the teapot out of the way. In a powerful voice, resonant and deep, he read to them the chapter in which is narrated the meeting of Jesus Christ with the woman taken in adultery.

"Now kneel with me and let us pray for the soul of our dear sister, Sadie Thompson."

He burst into a long, passionate prayer in which he implored God to have mercy on the sinful woman. Mrs. Macphail and Mrs. Davidson knelt with covered eyes. The doctor, taken by surprise, awkward and sheepish, knelt too. The missionary's prayer had a savage

eloquence. He was extraordinarily moved, and as he spoke the tears ran down his cheeks. Outside, the pitiless rain fell, fell steadily, with a fierce malignity that was all too human.

At last he stopped.

Mrs. Davidson's face was pale and restless. She was comforted and at peace, but the Macphails felt suddenly bashful. They did not know which way to look.

"I'll just go down and see how she is now," said Doctor Macphail.

When he knocked at her door it was opened for him by Horn. Miss Thompson was in a rocking-chair, sobbing quietly.

"What are you doing there?" exclaimed Macphail. "I told you to lie down."

"I can't lie down. I want to see Mr. Davidson."

"My poor child, what do you think is the good of it? You'll never move him."

"He said he'd come if I sent for him."

Macphail motioned to the trader.

"Go and fetch him."

He waited with her in silence while the trader went upstairs. Davidson came in.

"Excuse me for asking you to come here," she said, looking at him somberly.

"I was expecting you to send for me. I knew the Lord would answer my prayer."

They stared at one another for a moment and then she looked away. She kept her eyes averted when she spoke.

"I've been a bad woman. I want to repent."

"Thank God! Thank God! He has heard our prayers."

He turned to the two men.

"Leave me alone with her. Tell Mrs. Davidson that our prayers have been answered."

They went out and closed the door behind them.

"Gee whizz!" said the trader.

That night Doctor Macphail could not

get to sleep till late, and when he heard the missionary come upstairs he looked at his watch. It was two o'clock. But even then he did not go to bed at once, for through the wooden partition that separated their rooms he heard him praying aloud, till he himself, exhausted, fell asleep.

When he saw him next morning he was surprised at his appearance. He was paler than ever, tired, but his eyes shone with an inhuman fire. It looked as though he were filled with an overwhelming joy.

"I want you to go down presently and see Sadie," he said. "I can't hope that her body is better, but her soul—her soul is transformed."

The doctor was feeling wan and nervous.

"You were with her very late last night," he said.

"Yes, she couldn't bear to have me leave her."

"You look as pleased as Punch," the doctor said irritably.

Davidson's eyes shone with ecstasy.

"A great mercy has been vouchsafed me. Last night I was privileged to bring a lost soul to the loving arms of Jesus."

Miss Thompson was again in the rocking-chair. The bed had not been made. The room was in disorder.

She raised her eyes dully when the doctor came in. She was cowed and broken.

"Where's Mr. Davidson?" she asked.

"He'll come presently if you want him," answered Macphail acidly. "I came here to see how you were."

"Oh, I guess I'm O. K. You needn't worry about that."

"Have you had anything to eat?"

"Horn brought me some coffee."

She looked anxiously at the door.

"D'you think he'll come down soon? I feel as if it wasn't so terrible when he's with me."

"Are you still going on Tuesday?"

"Yes, he says I've got to go. Please

tell him to come right along. You can't do me any good. He's the only one as can help me now."

"Very well," said Doctor Macphail.

During the next three days the missionary spent almost all his time with Sadie Thompson. He joined the others only to have his meals. Doctor Macphail noticed that he hardly ate.

"He's wearing himself out," said Mrs. Davidson pitifully. "He'll have a breakdown if he doesn't take care, but he won't spare himself."

She herself was white and pale. She told Mrs. Macphail that she had no sleep. When the missionary came upstairs from Miss Thompson he prayed till he was exhausted, but even then he did not sleep for long. After an hour or two he got up and dressed himself, and went for a tramp along the bay. He had strange dreams.

"This morning he told me that he'd been dreaming about the mountains of Nebraska," said Mrs. Davidson.

"That's curious," said Doctor Macphail.

He remembered seeing them from the windows of the train when he crossed America. They were like huge mole hills, rounded and smooth, and they rose from the plain abruptly.

Davidson's restlessness was intolerable even to himself. But he was buoyed up by a wonderful exhilaration. He was tearing out by the roots the last vestiges of sin that lurked in the hidden corners of that poor woman's heart. He read with her and prayed with her.

"It's wonderful," he said to them one day at supper. "It's a true rebirth. Her soul, which was black as night, is now pure and white like the new-fallen snow. I am humble and afraid. Her remorse for all her sins is beautiful. I am not worthy to touch the hem of her garment."

"Have you the heart to send her back to San Francisco?" said the doctor.

"Three years in an American prison! I

should have thought you might have saved her from that."

"Ah, but don't you see? It's necessary. Do you think my heart doesn't bleed for her? I love her as I love my wife and my sister. All the time that she is in prison I shall suffer all the pain that she suffers."

"Bunkum!" cried the doctor impatiently.

"You don't understand because you're blind. She's sinned, and she must suffer. I know what she'll endure. She'll be starved and tortured and humiliated. I want her to accept the punishment of man as a sacrifice to God. I want her to accept it joyfully. She has an opportunity which is offered to very few of us. God is very good and very merciful."

Davidson's voice trembled with excitement. He could hardly articulate the words that tumbled passionately from his lips.

"All day I pray with her and when I leave her I pray again; I pray with all my might and main, so that Jesus may grant her this great mercy. I want to put in her heart the passionate desire to be punished so that at the end, even if I offered to let her go, she would refuse. I want her to feel that the bitter punishment of prison is the thank offering that she places at the feet of our Blessed Lord, who gave His life for her."

The days passed slowly. The whole household, intent on the wretched, tortured woman downstairs, lived in a state of unnatural excitement. She was like a victim that was being prepared for the savage rites of a bloody idolatry. Her terror numbed her. She could not bear to let Davidson out of her sight; it was only when he was with her that she had courage, and she hung upon him with a slavish dependence. She cried a great deal, and she read the Bible, and prayed. Sometimes she was exhausted and apathetic. Then she did indeed look forward to her ordeal, for it seemed to

offer an escape, direct and concrete, from the anguish she was enduring. She could not bear much longer the vague terrors which now assailed her. Meanwhile the rain fell with a cruel persistence. You felt that the heavens must at last be empty of water, but still it poured down, straight and heavy, with a maddening iteration, on the iron roof. Everything was damp and clammy. There was mildew on the walls and on the boots that stood on the floor. Through the sleepless nights the mosquitoes droned their angry chant.

"If it would only stop raining for a single day, it wouldn't be so bad," said Doctor Macphail.

They all looked forward to the Tuesday when the boat for San Francisco was to arrive from Sydney. The strain was intolerable. So far as Doctor Macphail was concerned, his pity and his resentment were alike extinguished by his desire to be rid of the unfortunate woman. The inevitable must be accepted. He felt he would breathe more freely when the ship had sailed. Sadie Thompson was to be escorted on board by a clerk in the governor's office. This person called on the Monday evening and told Miss Thompson to be prepared at eleven in the morning. Davidson was with her.

"I'll see that everything is ready. I mean to come on board with her myself."

Miss Thompson did not speak.

When Doctor Macphail blew out his candle and crawled cautiously under his mosquito curtains he gave a sigh of relief.

"Well, thank God that's over. By this time to-morrow she'll be gone."

"Mrs. Davidson will be glad too. She says he's wearing himself to a shadow," said Mrs. Macphail. "She's a different woman."

"Who?"

"Sadie. I should never have thought it possible. It makes one humble."

Doctor Macphail did not answer, and presently he fell asleep. He was tired out, and he slept more soundly than usual.

He was awakened in the morning by a hand placed on his arm, and, starting up, saw Horn by the side of his bed. The trader put his finger on his mouth to prevent any exclamation from Doctor Macphail and beckoned to him to come. As a rule he wore shabby ducks, but now he was barefoot and wore only the *lava-lava* of the natives. He looked suddenly savage, and Doctor Macphail, getting out of bed, saw that he was heavily tattooed. Horn made him a sign to come onto the veranda. Doctor Macphail got out of bed and followed the trader out.

"Don't make a noise," he whispered. "You're wanted. Put on a coat and some shoes. Quick!"

Doctor Macphail's first thought was that something had happened to Miss Thompson.

"What is it? Shall I bring my instruments?"

"Hurry, please, hurry."

Doctor Macphail crept back into the bedroom, put on a waterproof over his pajamas, and a pair of rubber-soled shoes. He rejoined the trader, and together they tiptoed down the stairs. The door leading out to the road was open and at it were standing half-a-dozen natives.

"What is it?" repeated the doctor.

"Come along with me," said Horn.

He walked out and the doctor followed him. The natives came after them in a little bunch. They crossed the road and came onto the beach. The doctor saw a group of natives standing round some object at the water's edge. They hurried along, a couple of dozen yards perhaps, and the natives opened out as the doctor came up. The trader pushed

him forward. Then he saw, lying half in the water and half out, a dreadful object—the body of Davidson. Doctor Macphail bent down—he was not a man to lose his head in an emergency—and turned the body over. The throat was cut from ear to ear, and in the right hand was still the razor with which the deed was done.

"He's quite cold," said the doctor. "He must have been dead some time."

"One of the boys saw him lying there on his way to work just now and came and told me. Do you think he did it himself?"

"Yes. Some one ought to go for the police."

Horn said something in the native tongue, and two youths started off.

"We must leave him here till they come," said the doctor.

"They mustn't take him into my house. I won't have him in my house."

"You'll do what the authorities say," replied the doctor sharply. "In point of fact, I expect they'll take him to the mortuary."

They stood waiting where they were. The trader took a cigarette from a fold in his *lava-lava* and gave one to Doctor Macphail. They smoked while they stared at the corpse. Doctor Macphail could not understand.

"Why do you think he did it?" asked Horn.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. In a little while native police came along, under the charge of a marine, with a stretcher, and immediately afterward a couple of naval officers and a naval doctor. They managed everything in a businesslike manner.

"What about the wife?" said one of the officers.

"Now that you've come I'll go back to the house and get some things on. I'll see that it's broken to her. She'd better not see him till he's been fixed up a little."

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"I guess that's right," said the naval doctor.

When Doctor Macphail went back he found his wife nearly dressed.

"Mrs. Davidson's in a dreadful state about her husband," she said to him as soon as he appeared. "He hasn't been to bed all night. She heard him leave Miss Thompson's room at two, but he went out. If he's been walking about since then, he'll be absolutely dead."

Doctor Macphail told her what had happened and asked her to break the news to Mrs. Davidson.

"But why did he do it?" she asked, horror-stricken.

"I don't know."

"But I can't. I can't."

"You must."

She gave him a frightened look and went out. He heard her go into Mrs. Davidson's room. He waited a minute to gather himself together and then began to shave and wash. When he was dressed he sat down on the bed and waited for his wife. At last she came.

"She wants to see him," she said.

"They've taken him to the mortuary. We'd better go down with her. How did she take it?"

"I think she's stunned. She didn't cry. But she's trembling like a leaf."

"We'd better go at once."

When they knocked at her door Mrs. Davidson came out. She was very pale, but dry-eyed. To the doctor she seemed unnaturally composed. No word was exchanged, and they set out in silence down the road. When they arrived at the mortuary Mrs. Davidson spoke.

"Let me go in and see him alone."

They stood aside. A native opened a door for her and closed it behind her. They sat down and waited. One or two white men came and talked to them in undertones. Doctor Macphail told them again what he knew of the tragedy. At last the door was quietly opened and Mrs. Davidson came out. Silence fell upon them.

"I'm ready to go back now," she said.

Her voice was hard and steady. Doctor Macphail could not understand the look in her eyes. Her pale face was very stern. They walked back slowly, never saying a word, and at last they came round the bend on the other side of which stood their house. Mrs. Davidson gave a gasp, and for a moment they stopped still. An incredible sound assaulted their ears. The gramophone which had been silent for so long was playing, playing ragtime loud and harsh.

"What's that?" cried Mrs. Macphail with horror.

"Let's go on," said Mrs. Davidson.

They walked up the steps and entered the hall. Miss Thompson was standing at her door, chatting with a sailor. A sudden change had taken place in her. She was no longer the cowed drudge of the last days. She was dressed in all her finery, in her white dress, with the high, shiny boots over which her legs bulged in their cotton stockings; her hair was elaborately arranged; and she wore that enormous hat covered with gaudy flowers. Her face was painted, her eyebrows were boldly black, and her lips were scarlet. She held herself erect. She was the flaunting queen that they had known at first. As they came in she broke into a loud, jeering laugh. Mrs. Davidson cowered back, and two red spots rose suddenly to her cheeks. Then, covering her face with her hands, she broke away and ran quickly up the stairs. Doctor Macphail was outraged. He pushed past the woman into her room.

"What the devil are you doing?" he cried. "Stop that damned machine."

He went up to it and tore the record off. She turned on him.

"Say, doc, you can that stuff with me. What the hell are you doin' in my room?"

"What do you mean?" he cried. "What d'you mean?"

She gathered herself together. No one could describe the scorn of her expression or the contemptuous hatred she put into her answer.

"You men! You're all the same, all of you. Pigs! Pigs!"

Doctor Macphail gasped. He understood.



SOME one has said: "It was a great day for fools when modesty was made a virtue."—*David Graham Phillips.*



THERE is no disguise which can long conceal love where it does, or feign it where it does not, exist.—*François, Duc de la Rochefoucauld.*



THE upper are not wiser than the lower orders because they resolve to differ from them. The fashionable have the advantage of the unfashionable in nothing but the fashion.—*William Hazlitt.*



It is so nice, don't you think, to feel that in the upper circles everything is not quite as it should be. This feeling is one the moralists condemn. Yet it is perfectly natural. Our chief source of unhappiness is the happiness of other people. And vice versa. And there you are!—*Edgar Saltus.*



THE only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful. It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also.—*Oscar Wilde.*



WHY am I so ungrateful to her still for all the happiness she gave me? There were things between us two as lovers—love, things more beautiful than anything else in the world, things that set the mind hunting among ineffectual images in a search for impossible expression, images of sunlight shining through blood-red petals, images of moonlight in a scented garden, of marble gleaming in the shade, of far-off, wonderful music heard at dusk in a great stillness, of fairies dancing softly, of floating happiness and stirring delights, of joys as keen and sudden as the knife of an assassin, assassin's knives made out of tears, tears that are happiness, wordless things; and surprises, expectations, gratitudes, sudden moments of contemplation, the sight of a soft eyelid in sleep, shadowy tones in the sound of a voice heard unexpectedly; sweet, dear magical things I can find no words for. If she was a goddess to me, should it be any affair of mine that she was not a goddess to herself?—*H. G. Wells.*

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By
Arthur Mills

Author of

The Primrose Path



Piccadilly 395

WHAT is your little name?" she asked, slipping her arm through his and squeezing his hand.

George Besment saw no reason why he should tell a stranger his Christian name, and answered:

"Alfred, and my other name is Snooks."

"Alfred Nooks," she repeated after him with some difficulty. "No, it is really—tell me true."

Besment looked at her, saw the glitter of the exquisite rings on her fingers and the sheen from her gold-and-platinum bag; he smelled the alluring and expensive scent with which she was perfumed, and caught the roguish twinkle from her eyes as the cab passed a lamp.

"Little monkey!" he said half to her, half to himself.

"What? I do not understand." She wrinkled her forehead and snuggled to him closer.

They were nearing Duke Street, where she had said she had her flat. Besment slid his hand into his trousers'

pocket to find half a crown for the cabman. He would leave her at the door. At his age—thirty-one—it was getting rather ridiculous to make casual acquaintances in dance clubs. She had been with a friend at the next table to him—the friend was also jeweled and manicured and highly perfumed. It had amused him to hear the two chattering together in French. It was a pretty language, he reflected, spoken by pretty women. Eyes had been flashed at him, and he had noticed that the girl then with him in the cab was the more attractive of the two.

As he was leaving the dance club he had found himself beside her at the entrance. There had only been one taxicab; he had offered to drop her at her flat. He ought to have known better at his age. Then he smiled to himself as he thought of the last twelve years. They had not been bad years.

"Non, je ne suis pas un petit singe," she broke in upon his reverie.

He laughed. It was clever of her to

have thought out the meaning of the English words. The cab had stopped by her door.

"You come in and have a drink?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"I can't really, I must be getting on."

"Just two minute."

There was an allure in her voice. He hesitated. They were already both standing by the lift.

Her flat was prettily furnished and expensive looking. A bright fire burned in the grate and a large sofa was drawn up in front of it. She prepared him a whisky and soda.

"Sit down."

"No, really, I must just swallow this and be off. Give me your telephone number; we must meet some other time."

He had no intention of ever telephoning to her.

She got up and stood beside him, unbuttoned his overcoat, and slipped it from his shoulders. She had taken off her hat, and he smelled a pleasant perfume from her curly, brown hair. She was a pretty girl, with a tilted nose and rather wide mouth.

He took his cigarette case from his pocket and sat down in a corner of the sofa. He knew now that he would be there for at least a quarter of an hour. She took from the table a jewel case, unlocked it, and proceeded to put into the little velvet drawers her rings, necklace, and brooches.

"I shall not go out any more to-night," she said.

"By Jove, you have got some pretty things there!" He looked at the top tray of the jewel case. "I wish I was rich!" he added.

Her quick eyes had seen his gold cigarette case and noted his well-cut clothes.

"You are not rich!" she said in a tone of surprise.

He laughed and shook his head. "I have two hundred pounds a year."

"*Bon Dieu*, that is not much!" She looked at him compassionately and admired his fair, smooth hair and clear, blue eyes. She liked the little, curling mustache that covered his lip.

He reflected with some bitterness that this confession would at least facilitate his departure.

"Now, really, I must be going," he said, glancing at the clock. "It is half past six."

"No, stay a little." She came and stood once more very close to him and took hold of the lapel of his coat.

"I can't," he answered.

She saw he meant what he said.

"Very well, you will telephone: Piccadilly 395."

"Yes, I will telephone: 395 Piccadilly. So long!"

"Good-by!" She threw her arms around his shoulders and lifted her face to his.

He stiffened immediately, disengaged himself, and held out his hand.

"You don't want to kiss me?" She looked at the outstretched hand.

"Yes, of course I do, but we cannot always do what we want," he answered, and slipped through her door.

"How funny they are—*les Anglais*," she murmured to herself when he had gone, and selected from a silver box a thin, gold-tipped cigarette.

That night he dined with his future father-in-law, his future mother-in-law, and his fiancée. Ermyntrode was wearing a singularly unfortunate dress of bright scarlet that played havoc with her heavy, unpowdered white cheeks; her hair—dull mouse color—shone with an oily luster in the lamplight. She was a stolid sort of girl, and in the three months they had been engaged had never shown any sign of emotion; she had agreed placidly to the engagement, and superintended in a methodical way the

various subsequent arrangements that it entailed. George imagined that she was marrying him because her parents wished it, and believed she was as happy at the idea as she would have been marrying any one else. She had money and he had a name. They were to be married the next day at two o'clock.

During dinner, talk ran on houses, furniture, servants, and the cost of living. George's mind wandered a good deal.

"Have an almond?" said Ermytrude. George started. Ermytrude always asked him to have an almond in exactly the same voice about four times during dinner. He was determined there should be no almonds in the house once they were married.

"I think Ermytrude had better go to bed early," said her mother at a quarter to ten. "She has a tiring day to-morrow."

Ermytrude said good night all round, and George felt sure as he kissed her cold cheek that she would sleep that night as soundly as usual. He smoked a last cigarette with her father and then left the house.

It was a beautiful winter's night as he walked down Piccadilly. Bright stars shone above, and the street was busy with the traffic between restaurants and theaters. Besment walked moodily back to his rooms, let himself in, turned on the light, and sat down in an arm-chair. So on the morrow he was to be married. Thenceforward many things that had not been within his reach would be easily obtainable. Ermytrude's parents, supervised by the Besment family solicitors, had made generous provision for the husband of their daughter. He

would be able to put his place in Warwickshire to rights; he would be able to hunt again. In the eyes of the world he could count himself lucky.

He leaned forward and poked with savage vehemence a coal that was not burning well.

"This is the end of my young days," he said to himself. "There will be no more gathering of roses for me."

Then his eye suddenly caught the black vulcanite mouthpiece of his telephone. He did not know her name or remember the exact locality of her flat, but "Piccadilly 395," she had said. He looked away hastily and stared at the fire. After all, he was not married yet. Why not go out and have some supper and a cheery evening? Why not? His hand moved toward the instrument. He removed the receiver and put it to his ear.

"Hullo! Exchange! Look here, give me Pic——"

A voice interrupted: "Will you take a call first, please?"

"Yes, yes," he answered testily.

A few seconds passed and then he heard the voice of Ermytrude's mother—a voice he had learned to know lamentably well:

"Is that you, George? It is just to say—you are motoring down to Cornwall to-morrow, aren't you, dear? Well, this is just to say be sure to see Ermytrude wears her new fur coat—everything will be such a rush to-morrow, and I may not have time to tell you. Good night, dear boy; sleep well!"

George put back the receiver, swore, and then lifted the receiver again.

"Piccadilly 395," he said savagely.

"Line's out of order for the night," snapped back the operator.

SIMON flung out his hands in a gesture of impotence.

"I have loved you all my life."

"I am sorry," said Anastasia. "I am not worthy, Simon."

"No, you are not worthy. But one does not justify love by a mathematical demonstration. I love you."—*James Branch Cabell.*

Ghosts Of Loveliness

THE history of nations is embellished by some women who scintillate like stars; the history of human thoughts, of artistic thought, is illumined also by some feminine creations of writers, some designed by painters or modeled by sculptors. The body of the Venus of Milo, the head of the Joconda, the face of Manon Lescaut, haunt and move our souls, live ever in the hearts of men.

There is Dido, the woman who loves in the maturity of her age, with all the ardor of her blood, all the violence of her desires, all the fever of her caresses. She is sensual, passionate, enthusiastic, with a mouth on which tremble kisses which bite sometimes, with arms always open to embrace—bold eyes which demand the contact, the flame of which is immodest.

There is Juliet, the young girl in whose bosom love awakens—love already burning, chaste still—which bruises and kills!

There is Virginia, more candid, more naïve, divinely pure in the green island yonder. She dreams; she weeps; she never evokes any sensual desire. She is the virgin and martyr of poetic love.

Then there is Manon Lescaut. More truly feminine than all the others, frankly rouée; perfidious, loving; distracting, spirituelle, formidable and charming. In this figure, so full of seductiveness and instinctive perfidy, seems to be embodied all that is most pleasing, the most tempting, and the most infamous of the creature woman. Manon is completely, entirely woman, as she always has been, as she is, and always will be.—*Guy de Maupassant.*



Cleopatra

THE barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggared all description: she did lie
In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue—
O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature. On each side her
Stood pretty, dimpled boys, like smiling cupids,
With divers colored fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid, did. . . .
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetite they feed; but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies.—*William Shakespeare.*



Beatrice

NINE times now since my birth the heaven of light had turned almost to the same point in its own gyration, when the glorious lady of my mind, who was called Beatrice by many who knew not what to call her, first appeared before my

eyes. She appeared to me clothed in a most noble color, a modest and becoming crimson, and she was girt and adorned in such wise as befitted her youthful age. At that instant, I say truly that the spirit of life, which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble with such violence that it appeared fearfully in the least pulses, and, trembling, said these words: "Behold a god stronger than I, who coming shall rule over me."—*Dante Alighieri.*



Agnes Sorel

AGNES SOREL was the bright lady's name,
And never Love had formed so fair a dame.
Think but of Flora's youth—the wood nymph's mien
And slender figure—of the grace serene
Of all-enchanting Venus—Cupid's spell,
Arachne's art, the Syren's sweetest strains—
All these were hers. So, fettered in her chains,
Heroes and kings and sages gladly fell.—*Voltaire.*



Queen Elizabeth

PERSONALLY, Queen Elizabeth had more than her mother's beauty. Her figure was commanding, her face long but queenly and intelligent, her eyes quick and fine. She had grown up amidst the liberal culture of Henry's court a bold horsewoman, a good shot, a graceful dancer, a skilled musician, and an accomplished scholar. Her moral temper recalled in its strange contrasts the mixed blood within her veins. She was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage, and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh, manlike voice, her impetuous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger came to her with her Tudor blood. But strangely in contrast stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendor and pleasure were to Elizabeth the very air she breathed. She loved gayety and laughter and wit. She hoarded jewels. Her dresses were innumerable. Her vanity remained, even in old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. Her levity, her frivolous laughter, her unwomanly jests gave color to a thousand scandals. Of womanly reserve and restraint she knew nothing. But luxurious and pleasure-loving as she seemed, Elizabeth lived simply and frugally, and she worked hard. If in loftiness of aim her temper fell below many of the tempers of her time, in the breadth of its range, in the universality of its sympathy it stood far above them all.—*John Richard Green.*



Bianca Capello

BIANCA was a charming girl of fifteen or sixteen, with a dead-white complexion over which at the slightest emotion a blush would pass like a rosy cloud; hair of that intense blonde that Raphael thinks so beautiful; black eyes full of fire; a supple and firm waist; and as loving as Juliet herself.—*Alexandre Dumas.*

Gabrielle D'Estrées

WE must judge of the style of Gabrielle's beauty by the general impression it created at the time. She had a clear and fair complexion; light hair threaded with gold, which she wore turned back in a mass, or else in a fringe of short curls; she had a fine forehead, a delicately shaped and regular nose, a pretty little rosy, smiling mouth, and a winning and tender expression of countenance; her eyes were full of vivacity, and soft and clear. She was a thorough woman in all her tastes, in her ambition, and even in regard to her defects. She was very agreeable and had very good natural abilities, though she was not at all learned, and the only book found in her library was her prayer book.—*Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve.*



Marie De Mancini

MARIE DE MANCINI was a year or so younger than Louis XIV. and was ugly rather than beautiful. Her waist, which was large, might, it was true, become slighter in time; but at the present moment she was so thin, and her arms and neck so long, and so lean, that her enormous waist was rather a defect than a mark of beauty. She was brown, or yellow, rather; her large black eyes somewhat hard, and her mouth, garnished, it is true, with magnificent teeth, was large and flat. But if Nature had somewhat neglected her face, she had, on the other hand, richly endowed her mind. She was charming, and could chatter and talk delightfully.—*Alexandre Dumas.*



La Marquise De Montespan

THE Marquise de Montespan appeared at court with everything that was necessary to attract attention and to please. To the most overwhelming beauty was united the quickest, most delicate, and best cultivated of minds, the mind that was inherited like the personal beauty in her family, and that gave rise to the saying: "The Mortemart wit and conversation."—*Adolphe Duplessis.*



La Duchesse Du Maine

SET me always at the feet of the Duchesse du Maine. She is an elect soul; she will love comedy until her last moment, and when she falls ill I advise you to administer some fine piece of writing to her instead of extreme unction. We die as we have lived.—*Voltaire.*



Madame De Pompadour

MADAME DE POMPADOUR was an example of a woman that was both handsome and pretty; the lines of her face possessed all the harmony and elevation of a creation of Raphael's; but instead of the elevated sentiment with which that great master animated his faces, there was the smiling expression of a Parisian woman. She possessed in the highest degree all that gives to the face brilliancy, charm, and sportive gayety. No lady at court had then so noble and coquettish a bearing, such delicate and attractive features, so elegant and graceful a figure.—*Arsène Houssaye.*

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Catherine the Great

THE grand duchess is romantic, ardent, passionate; her eyes are brilliant; they look fascinating, glassy, like those of a wild beast. Her brow is high, and, if I mistake not, an awful future is written on that brow. She is kind and affable, but when she comes near me I draw back with a movement which I cannot control. She frightens me.—*The Chevalier d'Eon.*



Marie Antoinette

I FIRST painted the portrait of Marie Antoinette in 1799, when she was then at the brilliant pinnacle of her youth and beauty. She was large, well-formed, and not too stout. Her arms were superb, her hands little and beautifully formed, her feet exquisite. Her carriage was the finest of any in France; she bore her head high, with a queenliness which made it easy to distinguish her when she was surrounded by her maids of honor, and yet this majesty of bearing did not detract from the sweetness and benevolence of her countenance.

In short, it is difficult to convey to one who has not seen the queen a picture of so many graces and so much majesty united. Her features were not regular; she inherited the long, narrow face characteristic of the Austrians from her family; her eyes were by no means large; their color was pale blue, and their expression bright and sweet; her nose was well shaped and pretty, and her mouth was small enough, although the lips were rather full. The most remarkable thing about her face, however, was the brilliancy of her complexion. I have never beheld one so brilliant—and brilliant is the exact word that describes it; her skin was so transparent that it took no shadow; I could never set it down on canvas to suit me; I could find no colors with which to reproduce its freshness and the delicate tints which belonged to this charming face alone, and which I have never seen in any other woman.—*Madame Vigée Lebrun.*



Lady Hamilton

THE Chevalier Hamilton so long resident here in Naples as English ambassador, so long, too, connoisseur and student of art and nature, has found their counterpart and acme with exquisite delight in a lovely girl—English and some twenty years of age. She is exceedingly beautiful and finely made. She wears a Greek garb, becoming her to perfection. In her is the charm of all antiques, the fair profiles on Sicilian coins, the Apollo Belvedere himself.—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.*



Madame Récamier

HER angelic face can bear no other name; one look suffices to bind your heart to her forever.—*Lamartine.*

A FIGURE flexible and elegant; a well-poised head; throat and shoulders of admirable form and proportions; beautiful arms, though somewhat small; a little, rosy mouth; black hair that curled naturally; a delicate and regular nose, but *bien-fraçais*; and incomparable brilliancy of complexion; a frank, arch face, rendered irresistibly lovely from its expression of goodness; a carriage slightly indicative of both indolence and pride, so that to her might be applied Saint-Simon's compliment to the Duchess of Burgundy: "Her step was like that of a goddess on clouds."—*Madame Lenormant.*

The Constant Nymph



by
Margaret Kennedy
In Three Parts ... Part I

CHAPTER I.

AT the time of his death the name of Albert Sanger was barely known to the musical public of Great Britain. Among the very few who had heard of him there were even some who called him Sanjé, in the French manner, being disinclined to suppose that great men are occasionally born in Hammersmith.

That, however, is where he was born, of lower middle-class parents, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The whole world knew of it as soon as he was dead and buried. Englishmen, discovering a new belonging, became excited; it appeared that Sanger had been very much heard of everywhere else. His claims to immortality were canvassed eagerly by people who hoped soon to have an opportunity of hearing his work. His idiom, which was demonstrably neither Latin nor Gothic nor yet Slav, was discovered to be Anglo-Saxon. Obituary columns talked

of the gay simplicity of his rhythms, an unmistakably national feature, which, they declared, took one back to Chaucer. They lamented that yet another prophet had passed without honor in his own country.

But for this the British public was not entirely to blame; few people can sincerely admire a piece of music which they have not heard. During Sanger's lifetime his work was never performed in England. It was partly his own fault, since he composed nothing but operas, and these on a particularly grandiose scale. Their production was a risky enterprise, under the most promising conditions; and in England the conditions attending the production of an opera are never promising. The press suggested that other British composers had been heard in London repeatedly while Sanger languished in a little limbo of neglect. This was not quite the case. The limbo has never been as little as that.

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Sanger, moreover, hated England, left it at an early age, never went back, and seldom spoke of it without some strong qualification.

Appreciation, though tardy, was generous when it came. A special effort was made, about a year after Sanger's death, and The Nine Muses, an enterprising repertory theater south of the river, undertook the production of "Prester John," the shortest and simplest of the operas. The success of the piece was unqualified. All the intelligentsia and some others flocked to hear, and proved by their applause how ready they were to appreciate English music as soon as ever they got the chance. There were no howls of rage such as had arisen when "Prester John" was produced in Paris; no free fights in the gallery between the partisans and foes of the composer. The whole thing was as decorous as possible, and the respectful ardor of the audience, their prolonged cheers at the end, left no doubt as to Sanger's posthumous position in his own country. It was not unlike the ovation accorded to a guest of honor who arrives a little late.

Having renounced his native land, Sanger adopted no other. He roved about from one European capital to another, never settling anywhere for long, driven forward by his strange, restless fancy. Usually he quartered himself upon his friends, who were accustomed to endure a great deal from him. He would stay with them for weeks, composing third acts in their spare bedrooms, producing operas which always failed financially, falling in love with their wives, conducting their symphonies, and borrowing money from them. His preposterous family generally accompanied him. Few people could recollect quite how many children Sanger was supposed to have got, but there always seemed to be a good many and they were most shockingly brought up. They were, in their own orbit,

known collectively as "Sanger's Circus," a nickname earned for them by their wandering existence, their vulgarity, their conspicuous brilliance, the noise they made, and the kind of naphthafare genius which illuminated everything they said or did. Their father had given them a good, sound musical training and nothing else. They had received no sort of regular education, but, in the course of their travels, had picked up a good deal of mental furniture and could abuse each other most profanely in the *argot* of four languages.

They seldom remained more than three months consecutively in the same place, but they had, as a matter of fact, one home of their own, an overgrown chalet in the Austrian Tyrol, where they were accustomed to spend the spring and early summer. Sanger liked Alpine scenery of a moderate kind and chose to have some place where he could entertain his friends. He invited all the world to come and stay with him, disregarding grandly his poverty and the want of proper sleeping accommodation in his house. His habitual sociability was unbounded; he was constantly picking up new acquaintances and these always got an invitation to the Karindehütte. The chalet was often full to overflowing and, to make room for the swarming guests, the children were sent out to sleep at neighboring farms. Odd strangers of all classes and nationalities, people whose very names had been forgotten by Sanger, would turn up unexpectedly. No visitor could be sure what queer combination might be thrust into his room, or, indeed, into his very bed. Everybody was welcome.

These tumults and discomforts were endured by the guests for Sanger's sake. In his prime the enchantment of his convivial presence drew them to the house in the mountains as often as ever they were asked. The place had a spell which no one who had been there could

forget. In after years it became a legend. It was the nearest approach to a home built by this wandering star, and, dying there, he was buried under the gentians and primulas in the pleasant alp before his door.

Visitors to the Karindethal were generally obliged to spend the night at a little town in the valley of the Inn, for the last stage of the journey was long and slow. Persons coming from a distance usually arrived at this place late in the evening, and, if they could afford it, went to the Station Hotel. Not that the Station Hotel was costly, being, indeed, quite a humble little public house; but Sanger's guests were sometimes very poor and traveled fourth class, all among the mothers and babies and market baskets.

Among them and under them. Lewis Dodd, traveling up the Innthal one night late in May, got so far buried beneath the other fourth-class passengers that he found it difficult to leave the train at the right station and was very nearly carried on to Innsbruck. Disengaging himself in the nick of time, he got stiffly down onto a waste of railway lines, shouldered his knapsack and made for the Station Hotel, following an elderly porter who carried two large, beautiful leather suit cases. These belonged to a first-class passenger who had left the train without difficulty some five minutes earlier and was already established at the inn.

They crossed the station yard, a small graveled inclosure surrounded by chestnuts all in bloom, like Christmas trees, with their thick, spiky candles. Tall arc lamps among the tree trunks splashed the darkness here and there with pools of white light and painted inky shadows among the brilliant leaves. Hidden in the night, all round the little town, were the mountains. The air of the snow-fields, sharp and cool, came in puffs through the warm, heavy smell of chestnut blossoms. The first-class passenger,

remarking it, had taken off his hat and wiped his forehead and murmured something about the heavenly beautiful *Bergluft*, before going in to his supper. Lewis also lifted up his face to the hidden ranges which, on clear nights, shut out the stars from the valley towns. He was very glad to be going back again to the lovely mountain spring and to his friend Sanger.

Both these travelers were on their way to the Karindehütte, but they did not discover each other until next morning, when they breakfasted at adjoining tables in the bare little coffee room. Here they waited for the eggs they had ordered and observed one another suspiciously. Their mutual impressions were so little favorable that for some minutes they hesitated glumly on the brink of conversation.

The first-class passenger was a fat fellow who spoke fluent German with a French accent. He was probably a great deal younger than he looked. His clothes were impressive. He wore a magnificent suit, cut very square on the shoulders and a trifle too big for him. There was a good deal of unobtrusive but valuable jewelry about him, and a soft, black hat lay on the table at his elbow. His figure was heavy and unagile. He had thick, white hands, much manicured, and wore his dark hair *en brosse*, a style which ill-suited the full, fleshy curves of his pale face. His eyes, which should have been bold and greedy, were strangely unhappy and disclosed, in their direct gaze, an unexpected diffidence, an ingenuous modesty, entirely out of keeping with the rest of him. Of this he was aware; he seldom looked full at those people whom he wished to impress, but sometimes in his eagerness he forgot himself. His general air was excessively urbane, and he looked oddly out of place in the Bahnhof coffee room.

Lewis Dodd, on the other hand, was a lean youth, clothed in garments so nondescript as to merit no attention. He

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wore several waistcoats and had a yellow muffler round his neck. He, too, was pale with the kind of pallor that goes with ginger hair. Loose locks straggled across his bony forehead and hung in a sort of fringe over the muffler at the back of his neck. His young face was deeply furrowed, nor was there any reassurance to be found in his thin, rather cruel mouth, or in light, observant eyes, so intent that they rarely betrayed him. His companion, distrustful of his countenance, found, nevertheless, a wonderful beauty in his hands which gave a look of extreme intelligence to everything that he did, as though an extra brain was lodged in each finger. Their strength and delicacy contradicted the harsh lines of his face, and it was this contrast which determined the stranger to make a conversational plunge. He observed, as a cock crowed boastfully in the garden outside:

"An egg has been laid. It is, perhaps, the event for which we wait."

Lewis made an abrupt statement in such execrable German that he was not understood. He repeated it in French:

"Cocks don't lay eggs."

"*Tiens!*" exclaimed the other in surprise. "One never supposed that they did."

"Hens," pursued Lewis, "don't crow."

"*Tiens!*"

Lewis, inspired, began suddenly and with skill to demonstrate the noise of a hen who has laid an egg. His companion started violently. The landlady, hearing the *din* in the kitchen and understanding it as a reproach, put her head in at the door and declared that the eggs ordered by the highly well-born gentlemen were already in the frying pan. Whereat Lewis left off clucking and began to play spillikens with the wooden toothpicks on the table.

His companion, who had never seen toothpicks put to so paltry a use before, raised his eyebrows, shrugged his shoulders, and turned away. From the

leather portfolio beside him he took a fountain pen very much mounted in gold, a small notebook, and a roll of manuscript music. This he began to cover with annotations and strange hieroglyphics, referring occasionally to the note book. As he worked his large, mobile features writhed continuously; he frowned, blinked, snorted, smiled, and raised his eyebrows in a kind of frenzy.

His activities were observed with melancholy attention. Lewis abandoned the toothpicks and regarded him closely, seized by the unpleasant idea that they were to be fellow-guests at the Karindehütte. This fat person must be going to stay with Sanger; there was no other explanation for him. For the rest of the journey they would be compelled to travel together. They might even have to share the spare room unless Kate could be persuaded otherwise. Kate, the eldest of Sanger's daughters, was the only person in the household who ever wrestled with the problem of guests and beds. She was kind and thoughtful.

The odious possibilities before him depressed Lewis very much. He was too easily persuaded that he should not like people. His own appearance was not conspicuously prepossessing and he had no business to be so critical. While he sat wondering how long it would be before they were betrayed to each other, the landlady, bringing in the eggs, did the deed. She knew him well for an intimate of the Sangers and lingered genially to inquire after his health and send her compliments to the family, for whom she had a great liking since they brought so many guests to her house. They had only been up in the Karindehütte a fortnight, she told him, and she believed that they had come from Italy. One of the young gentlemen had got lost on the way. Getting out of the train at a wayside station in the middle of the night, he had been left behind. His loss was not discovered for some

hours as his family were all asleep. They had arrived in a great way about it. Fräulein Kate had wanted to go back, but Herr Sanger said that the child was old enough to look after itself. Fräulein Kate had wept and said that the poor little one had no money and no ticket. Gnädige Frau said that it served him right. They had argued most of the night about it, in this very room, sometimes in one language and sometimes in another, but in the end they decided to let the affair alone and went on to the Karindethal next day. The boy had turned up later.

Lewis listened and mumbled indistinct comments, aware that she had given him away. His fellow traveler was listening eagerly, and inquired when they were alone:

"You are going to visit Mr. Sanger?"

"Yes."

"Ach! I also!" The gentleman observed Lewis afresh from his yellow muffler to his ragged socks. "My name," he said, "is Trigorin. Kiril Trigorin."

He made a sort of little bow in his place where he sat. Lewis made another exactly like it. The name awoke vague echoes but he could not place it. Kiril Trigorin! The man had a box-office look, and his jewelry was of the presentation order. Possibly an operatic tenor. He became aware that the situation required something from him. He said hurriedly:

"My name is Dodd."

"Dodd? You are English?"

"Yes."

"Dodd! Is it possible that you are Mr. Lewis Dodd?"

Trigorin became radiant and turned full upon Lewis his innocent, humble gaze, crying:

"Can it be—can it be that I am at last to have the pleasure, the privilege, of meeting so gifted a composer? One for whose genius I have always—"

"Yes, my name's Lewis."

Trigorin got up, clicked his heels, and made a really deferential bow. Lewis nervously did the same, but was unable to avert a flood of polite felicitations upon his work, talents, and future. He learned that Mr. Trigorin had watched his career with attention; that he was, of all the younger men, the most promising and the most likely to stand by Sanger's side; that his least popular work, the "Revolutionary Songs" for choir and orchestra, was indisputably the finest and showed a great advance upon his better known "Symphony in Three Keys;" and that he must not be depressed because the public was taking a long time to discover him. With all original work, said Mr. Trigorin, this must be the case. The critics have always persecuted young genius. The plaudits of the herd are as nothing to the discerning appreciation of a small circle. Lewis found that his hand was seized and that he was being tearfully besought to rise above his own unpopularity.

"I should not mind it if I were you," ended Mr. Trigorin with great simplicity.

Lewis was not so grateful for this encouragement as he should have been. He disengaged his hand with a venomous look. It was not for the appreciation of people like this fat Slav that he had written the "Revolutionary Songs."

"In future," went on his friend, "we shall speak English. It is more better practice for me."

"All right," said Lewis.

"You have stayed at the Karindethütte before? But that is natural. You are the dear friend of Mr. Sanger."

"Am I?"

"It is well known. And what a privilege—"

And he was off again, undaunted by the limitations of his English. How great a genius was Sanger! Colossal! Nobody like him in the world! Lewis scarcely listened, for he had begun to

remember who the fellow was. Surely his name suggested a famous ballerina. Irina Zhigalova! Of course! This was her husband, and a person of some ability if it was true that he designed all her ballets. But what on earth was he doing here?

From Trigorin's conversation an explanation of sorts was emerging. It seemed that he had arranged a ballet in the autumn for Sanger's opera "Akbar," and had got this invitation on the strength of it.

"Never before have I visited here," he ended confidentially.

This was evident; the odd thing was that he should have been invited now.

"This moment, you can imagine, my dear sir, is for me a very great one. I go to visit Mr. Sanger; I meet Mr. Dodd. I find myself in the company of two most distinguished men all in the one time. I am amazed."

Lewis thought that he would be more amazed when he got to the Karindethütte. But he said nothing.

"Of what," demanded the innocent creature, "does the family consist?"

"Who? The Sangers? You've not met them all?"

"Only Mr. Sanger. At Prague he was alone. I think it is a large family."

"Oh—well—yes—pretty big."

Trigorin wished for more details which Lewis was most reluctant to give. At last he said:

"Well, there's madame."

"Madame?" said Trigorin dubiously. "You would say—Mrs. Sanger?"

"Yes," exclaimed Lewis, as though he had suddenly discovered a relieving explanation for madame. "And then there are the children."

"Many children?"

"Oh, yes. A lot of children." After a pause for thought he stated: "Seven!"

"Seven! And all the children of madame?"

"Oh, no! Not all." There was an-

other pause and then Mr. Dodd repeated: "Not all. Only one."

"Ach! Then the other six—they have had another mother?"

"Mothers."

"Mothers?"

"He's been married several times."

"So!"

"The first wife," said Lewis very glibly, "had two; the second four; and the third one. That makes seven."

"Please! Not so quick!"

Even when it was repeated more slowly Trigorin took some minutes to assimilate it. Then he said:

"And this Karindethal? How do we come there? By the road?"

"By the mountain railway," said Lewis. "It takes us up to the lake, where we get the little steamer across to Weissau. From there we drive four or five miles up the Karindethal to the foot of the pass. Then we get out and climb."

"Climb!" cried Trigorin, sweating a little at the mere thought of it. Lewis grinned and said with energy:

"Oh, yes. It's quite steep; several hundred feet. Too rough for driving."

"Ach! And our *gepöcks*? We must carry them?"

"Quite so. I hope you travel light, for your own sake."

"And the train? When does it go, Mr. Dodd?"

"Oh, in about an hour. I'll meet you at the station. I have to go into the town to buy a—*a* razor."

And Lewis made his escape, rather pleased to have got off so easily.

Lewis was not the first of his kind to snub Mr. Trigorin. They often did. But he did not deserve it. Indeed, he merited their pity, if all were known.

He had entertained in his early youth an ardent desire to compose music. He could imagine no keener joy. But his gifts were not upon a scale with his ambitions. He could write nothing that was at all worth listening to, and, being

cursed with unusual intelligence, he knew it. So he gave it up and took to arranging ballets, a business at which, almost against his will, he was eminently successful. He had a choreographic talent which hardly fell short of genius, and which was at first something of a consolation to him; though it was poignant work interpreting the music of other men. Falling in with La Zhigalova he designed for her a series of surpassingly beautiful ballets. She was a fine dancer, but no artist, and it was he who discovered to her the full possibilities of her own person and talents. Out of gratitude she married him, a little to his astonishment, and secured his services for life.

While thus saddled with a profession which he had not entirely chosen, Trigorin still thought sadly sometimes of his dead hopes, worshiped his flame in secret, revered deeply all composers who came in his way, and persisted in seeking the company of musicianly people. Unfortunately they seldom took to him, regarding him as something of a mountebank and undeniably vulgar. They were deceived by his air of metropolitan prosperity; he looked too much like the proprietor of an opera house. They could not see into the humble, disappointed heart beneath his magnificent waistcoats, or guess how sacred was the very name of music in his ears. Moreover, he was never at his best in their company; he lost all his impressive urbanity in his eagerness to be liked, talked too much, and, betrayed by his ardent heart, often appeared ridiculous.

Sanger, however, had reason to be grateful to him. They had met in Prague, in the preceding autumn, while the composer was staging his opera "Akbar" and driven to the verge of insanity by the stupidity of producers. He confided his difficulties to Trigorin. He had intended to present the dawn of Eastern history, young, primitive,

and heroic, in contrast to the splendor of its mysterious decay. Nobody could be made to see this; the ballets were languid and decadent with a stale aroma of the Arabian Nights. Conventional odalisques were introduced everywhere, even into his spirited hunting scenes. Could Trigorin help him? Trigorin could. He designed dances and a *décor* which caught that inflection of buoyancy suggested by the music. Sanger was charmed. He borrowed fifty pounds from his new friend and invited him to the Karindethal next spring.

The delight of Trigorin was unbounded. This was the first advance ever made to him by a composer of importance. He accepted in a passion of gratitude. When the spring came he had some difficulty in persuading his wife that he must be allowed to go, for she rated musicians a little lower than dressmakers. She would only permit it on condition that he would make Sanger write a ballet for her. Though doubtful of his ability to make such a request, he was so anxious to go that he was really ready to promise anything.

CHAPTER II.

Lewis found the journey up to Weisau better than he had expected. His companion was indeed horribly talkative, making intelligent comments upon the grandeur of the scenery all the way, but in the choice of his topics he showed a certain respect for Mr. Dodd's nervous sensibility. They agreed that the chestnut and oak of the valley had now given way to pine woods, and discussed the names of some of the peaks towering above them. As the little train panted its way into the Alpine pastures, Lewis was even so affable as to point out several waterfalls to his companion.

After a stiff ascent the line ended by a lake and they found a little steamer waiting for them. Mr. Trigorin said that the expanse of water lent an agree-

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able perspective to the mountains rising sharply on the other side. Mr. Dodd said that it was so, and that when they got across they would find the same thing to be true of the mountains on this side. Mr. Trigorin said he supposed so, and became a little silent and unhappy. They crossed the lake without further conversation.

When they had almost reached the hamlet of Weissau, Lewis exclaimed suddenly:

"There they are—some of them!"

"Please?" said Trigorin anxiously.

"Two of Sanger's children. On the landing stage."

He pointed to the little group of peasants waiting for the boat. Two young girls, standing rather apart from the crowd, had already recognized him and were waving vehemently. As soon as he got off the boat they flung themselves upon his neck, kissing him with eager delight.

"Oh, Lewis!" exclaimed the smaller. "We never expected to see you at all. Only some one is probably coming by this boat so we thought we'd come in and buy some sweets and get a ride back."

"Yes," said the other. "Sanger got a letter to say this person was coming. And you should hear how he goes on about it. He says he never——"

"I expect it was Trigorin," interrupted Lewis.

"O—oh, yes! That was the name Sanger said, wasn't it, Lina?"

"Well, then, this is your man. Mr. Trigorin. Miss Teresa Sanger; Miss Paulina Sanger."

Trigorin put down his suit cases and bowed low, beginning:

"I am most delighted——"

But Teresa cut him short.

"Lewis? Have you got—you know what?"

"What? Oh, I know. Yes. I have it in my knapsack."

"That's all right. We'd have lynched

you if you'd forgotten. But you've been the hell of a time fetching it. We've only got three days; his birthday's on Thursday. And he won't like it unless it's properly done."

"Three days will do if we work hard," Lewis assured her. "Look! Have you ordered a cart or anything? Because, if not, one of you must leg it up to the hotel and ask for one."

"Oh, we've got it. It's just behind the shop. It's got a pig in it that Kate told us to bring up. It's quite a quiet pig. It's dead."

Teresa looked at her sister and they both giggled.

"Can he eat bacon?" whispered Paulina in an audible aside, with a glance at Trigorin, who was waiting patiently beside his suit cases until somebody should take notice of him. "He looks a little like a Jew. We had an awful time once when Ikey Mo's uncle was staying with us and we had nothing in the house——"

"If he can't eat bacon, there'll be nothing else for him to eat," said Teresa. She turned to Trigorin and inquired baldly: "Are you a Jew?"

"No," he said, a little stiffly. "I am from Russia."

"Well, there are Jews in Russia, aren't there?" she argued.

"They are not as I," Trigorin told her.

"Really?" she said derisively. "We've all got something to be thankful for, haven't we? You have got a lot of luggage. I hope there'll be room for us all in the cart as well as the pig."

"It's a very heavy pig," supplemented Paulina, exploding again into suppressed laughter. "Tessa and I had to drag it all the way from the slaughter house."

They turned toward the little village shop which stood close to the landing stage. Lewis walked in front with a girl hanging lovingly on either arm; Trigorin toiled in the rear with his suit

cases. Behind the shop they found a very small carriage shaped something like a victoria, and, at the sight of it, the mirth of the children became almost hysterical. They had hoisted the gutted carcass of the pig into an upright position on the back seat. Draped in a tartan rug and crowned with Teresa's straw hat, it was a horrible object, but not unlike a stout German lady, when seen from a distance. The children, who thought it irresistibly funny, demanded eagerly if Lewis did not see a resemblance to Fräulein Brandt, the celebrated contralto.

"Perhaps," said Lewis. "But do you expect us to sit on these cushions? They are all over pig."

"Your clothes won't spoil, darling Lewis."

"They are all I have, darling Tessa. And what about Trigorin? He's a gentleman."

"I shall go on high with the driver," stated the gentleman firmly.

"Then," said Paulina, "Lewis and Tessa can sit on the back seat, and I on Lewis' knee, and we'll put the suit cases in front of us with Fräulein Brandt on top."

With some difficulty they were all packed in, and the little cart started off up the valley at a great pace. Soon the village was left behind and their way lay through pine woods, along a rough, green track. In front of them a straight wall of stony mountain shut out the sky, and they seemed to be driving to the very foot of the barrier.

Teresa and Paulina Sanger were at this time about fourteen and twelve years of age. They were the children of Sanger's second wife, who had been of gentle birth; from her they had inherited quick wits and considerable nervous instability. Both these qualities were betrayed in their eager, stammering speech and in the delicate impudence of their bearing. They had pale faces and small-boned, thin little bodies,

fragile but intrepid. They had high, benevolent foreheads from which their long hair was pushed back and hung in an untended tangle down their backs. Teresa was the fairer and the plainer; her greenish eyes had in them a kind of secret hilarity as though she privately found life a very diverting affair. But she had begun lately to grow out of everything, especially jokes and clothes, and she really saw no prospect of getting new ones. Still, she laughed pretty often. Paulina was less inclined for compromise, a brilliant child, sometimes tempestuous, sometimes vividly gay, never sensible, and always incurably wild. She had an extravagant and untutored taste in dress, and wore on this occasion a ragged gown of a brilliant red and green tartan which she had somehow managed to acquire. It was much too long for her, so she had kilted it up at intervals with pins, and in front it hung in vast folds over her flat little chest, being cut to fit a full bust. She used the space as a sort of pocket, stuffing in apples, sweets, and handkerchiefs, which gave her figure a very lumpy look. Teresa wore the peasant dress of the country: a yellow frock, brief and full, with a square-cut bodice and short sleeves. This she had touched up with a magenta apron. Both girls were barefoot. Both contrived to have, at unexpected moments and in spite of their rags, a certain arrogance of demeanor which proclaimed them the daughters of Evelyn Sanger, who had been a Churchill.

They chattered incessantly all the way up the valley, and Paulina, producing peppermints from the bosom of her bright gown, refreshed the whole party, including Trigorin on the box.

"You heard about Sebastian getting lost on the way up?" she said. "You know, at the place where he got left behind he met some Americans. And he told them he'd been kidnaped by anarchists and that he was really a Rus-

sian prince. I don't expect they believed him. But they liked him. He said they kept telling each other how cute he was. They brought him on with them to Innsbruck, and he had a lovely time stopping with them at their hotel. When he got tired of it, he went to the manager of the Opera House, who's a friend of Sanger's, and borrowed enough money to get on here."

"And what did the Americans say?"

"Oh, he left a note behind to say he'd made a mistake about who he was, but he'd had a blow on the head when quite a child which confused his memory. He said it had come to him all of a sudden that he was the son of Albert Sanger, and that he'd gone home. By the way, you didn't see Tony anywhere in the town, did you?"

"Antonia? No, I didn't. Is she there?"

"We don't know where she is," said Teresa. "She's been gone nearly a week now. She left a note to say she was going to stay a bit with a friend, but she'd be back for Sanger's birthday."

"We can't think what friend she can have gone to," added Paulina. "Sanger is quite annoyed about it. He says he'll belt her soundly when she gets back."

"He doesn't mean half he says," commented Lewis.

"I know," said Teresa, in a slightly lower voice. "He says he won't stir out of his room while that fellow up there"—she nodded at Trigorin's broad back—"is in the house. He says that he never thought the fool would be such a fool as to come."

"Linda may like to talk to him," suggested Lewis.

"I do hope she won't," whispered Teresa. "Because that might make him stay. But if nobody takes any notice of him, he might go away pretty soon. Why ever did Sanger invite him?"

"Oh, you know what he is! He'd invite the Pope if he met him after dinner."

"Yes, I know. But the Pope wouldn't come."

"What is this guy, anyway?" asked Paulina.

"He dances in a ballet," Lewis told them.

This they took as a tremendous joke, but he assured them with gravity that it was so.

"Well! I've heard of dancing elephants," declared Paulina at last.

She poked Trigorin in the back and he turned round, smiling benignantly down at her.

"He says"—she pointed at Lewis—"he says that you dance in a ballet. Do you?"

"Ach, no! I cannot dance."

Both children turned indignantly on Lewis, crying:

"Liar!"

But he, quite unabashed, declared that he had confused Trigorin with La Zhigalova, conveying an impression that Sanger's unwelcome guest had been invited solely upon her account and could lay no other claim to distinction. Trigorin said nothing and turned away from the group in the carriage, not without a certain grotesque dignity. The children, aware that Lewis had scored in some way, and regarding this as the first step in the routing of an interloper, exchanged gleeful glances. Teresa's mirth, however, was a little forced; she found herself wishing, absurdly, that Lewis had been kind to the poor, fat person on the box. As if Lewis was ever kind to anybody!

With a sudden spasm of alarm she stole a look at him, and saw that he was sleeping sleepily to himself. Paulina, tranquilly sucking a peppermint lozenge, was curled up on his knee. Thus often, in thoughtless security, had Teresa sat, when she was a little girl; when, with a child's hardness, she found his cruelty funny and saw nothing sinister in his perversities.

Now she was afraid of him, appre-

hending dimly all that he might have it in his power to make her feel. And yet she loved him very completely—better than any one else in the whole world. An odd state of things! She was inclined to regard these uneasy qualms as peculiar to her age, like the frequent growing pains in her legs which made her quite lame sometimes.

They drove out of the pine woods into an open meadow which formed the end of the valley. It was an almost circular space of short grass enameled all over with little, brilliant flowers. Many cows strayed across it, and the clear, sunny spaces were full of the music of their bells. An amphitheater of mountains rose upon every side, shutting out the world behind stony walls. At the farther end of the meadow a low ridge with a faint bridle track zigzagging across it marked the pass.

The Karindehütte was just visible about halfway up; a long, low chalet built upon a flat shelf which caught more sun than fell to the share of the valley meadow.

They drew up at the foot of the pass beside a little group of herdsmen's huts. Lewis and the girls jumped out at once and began to climb the mountain track, leaving Trigorin to pay for the carriage and arrange with a cowherd for the transport of his suit cases and the pig. He then followed pantingly, finding the sun very hot, his clothes very heavy and his boots very tight. As he toiled round each bend of the zigzag path he saw the others well in front of him, the little girls skipping over the rough stones on their hard, bare feet, and Lewis swinging steadily forward with his knapsack hitched up on his shoulders. They got past the good shade of the trees into a region of scorching blue air where the wind blew warm upon them, smelling of myrtle and Alpine rose.

At length the party in front, rounding the last corner, reached the ledge of

meadow where the Karindehütte was built. They paused for a moment to look over the valley and saw empty air in front of them, and, far below, the tops of trees and little cows and their carriage crawling back along the valley road. Cow bells rose very faintly like single drops of music distilled into this upper silence.

"I suppose," ventured Teresa, "that we ought to wait."

"He's getting very blown," said Lewis, going to the edge to look over at Trigorin on the path below.

Teresa hallooed kindly to the laboring figure and told him that he was very nearly at the top. Her brother Sebastian, who had joined them from the house, added encouraging shouts and besought the stranger to take it easily.

"Is he this person Sanger said was coming?" he asked his sisters.

Teresa nodded.

"His name's Trigorin," she said.

Sebastian was the youngest of Evelyn Sanger's four children, and possessed the largest measure of good breeding. Though entirely graceless, he was often very gentlemanly in his manners. He was ten years old, but looked younger, being very small and fair, like his sister Teresa, with grave, green eyes and a great mop of hair. He now thought it his duty to go down the hill a little way and welcome his father's guest.

"How do you do?" he said politely. "We are all so pleased that you have been able to come."

Trigorin stopped and wiped his forehead with a silk handkerchief. He perceived that this courteous urchin must be another of Sanger's children. It looked more propitious than the other two.

"This hill," he gasped, "is terrible!"

"It's a bit steep when you aren't used to it," agreed Sebastian. "But we've got a nice view at the top. I'm afraid my sisters came up too fast for you. Women, you know," he added confi-

dentially, "are inclined to run up hills. I've noticed it."

When they reached the level sward where the others waited for them he handed the guest over to his sisters with a great air, explaining:

"I'm afraid I can't come in just now. I have an engagement with this fellow."

And he pointed to a small peasant boy, rather younger than himself, who had been lurking in the shadow of the house. It appeared that they were going to look at some badger holes and the girls immediately demanded to be taken too. All the children set off hastily down the hill again, leaving Lewis and Trigorin alone on the Karinde Alp. Lewis said sulkily:

"Well, I suppose we'd better go in, as there seems to be no one about."

They went round to the front of the house, which had a long veranda looking over the valley. Here they came upon a massive but very beautiful woman fast asleep in a hammock.

"Madame," murmured Lewis, and they stood looking at her, uncertain what to do.

Linda Cowlard—for she had no real right to Sanger's name—was an exceptionally lovely creature, a vast, dazzling blonde. Her origins were obscure, but it was believed that she had once been the daughter of a tobacconist at Ipswich. She had a magnificent constitution, no nerves, and very few ideas; was, indeed, splendidly stupid. Sanger could not have found a more suitable companion. She had lived with him for eight years and showed, as yet, no signs of exhaustion. Her placid animal poise was, if anything, nourished by his insane jealousy and the violent quarrels which occasionally broke out between them. She was incapable of sustaining any severe shock, having the rudimentary nervous organization which relieves itself in distress by loud, immediate outcries. Her indolence was terrific; she lay dozing all day and seldom finished

her toilet before the afternoon. The management of the house she left to Sanger's daughters.

One child of her own she had—a little girl of seven years, whom Sanger had insisted upon calling Susan. Linda had modified this to Suzanne as being less common. The rest of the family derisively nicknamed their sister "Soozanne" in order to show their contempt for her. It was a wholesome, plebeian-looking brat, pink and formless as a wax doll, garnished about the head with tight clusters of yellow curls. Linda was very fond of it, dressed it in white with pink ribbons, and defended it sourly against the animosity of Sanger, who declared that Susan was a posturing little monkey and should have been trained for a tight-rope dancer. The child did, in fact, look something of a stranger among the others; her healthy inferiority especially distinguished her beside the brood of the ill-starred Evelyn, with their intermittent manifestations of intelligence and race.

The two young men looked at Linda and listened to a series of repeated hoots, going on inside the house, which Lewis identified as Kate practicing her head notes. A full morning sun blazed upon the woman in the hammock, but could hardly outshine her beauty. She wore a white dressing gown, flung carelessly about her, and beneath it some flimsy undergarment all lace and ribbons. Trigorin, always susceptible, gaped at her, his eyes nearly popping out of his head. Her superb bulk was entirely to his taste, but he had not expected somehow to find anything like her at the Karindehütte. Part of his nature resented her intrusion there; he suspected that she might disturb him when he wanted to talk about music to Sanger. Still he could not but feel that she was the most desirable woman he had ever set eyes on.

Lewis also stared down at her, with a wry smile, as if he had swallowed

vinegar. Then he looked away, looked at the blue, static mountains across the valley, and looked back again at Linda, and finally, catching sight of the perspiring Trigorin, burst into loud laughter.

Linda opened her eyes, which were the color of the gentians in the grass. She yawned, stretched her supple limbs like a large cat, and sat up.

"If it isn't Lewis!" she exclaimed. "Well, you are a stranger. Albert never said you were coming. Have you brought a friend?"

The blue eyes slid around to Trigorin.

"Mr. Trigorin, Mrs. Sanger," muttered Lewis.

"Pleased to meet you," said Linda, offering a large, cold hand. "We knew you were coming. Kate's been getting a room ready. Sit down, won't you, Mr. Trigorin. And you, too, Lewis."

They sat down and she took leisurely stock of the stranger. Usually she found the Karindehütte very dull. Albert's guests were not always amusing. Too often they were like Lewis, whom she detested. This one, however, might have possibilities. He wore expensive clothes and his bulging eyes proclaimed him a conquest. She began, in her sleepy voice, to make remarks to him, punctuated by slow, evasive smiles. Trigorin, lost in the flame of those blue eyes, stammered replies in English which emotion had made almost unintelligible. He was as helpless as a swimmer swept away in a strong current. Lewis, nursing his knapsack on his knee, observed them and smiled to himself. Occasionally he got from the lady a glance which was by no means friendly and which hinted that he might remove himself.

She had not always disliked him so bitterly. Once, some years ago, she had felt very kindly toward him and as good as told him so. But he, in spite of her conspicuous attractions, of which he was fully sensible, rejected her advances

with some brutality. He did not think her worth a breach with Sanger. She concealed her fury as best she could and continued to treat him civilly, at least in public, in the hope that Sanger might one day become jealous and forbid him the house. Sanger saw through her maneuvers and, in his turn, did not consider her worth a quarrel with Lewis, whom he valued beyond any woman in the world. But she persisted in the stratagem, being too stupid to devise any other method of attack.

Presently Lewis bethought himself that he had better see Kate soon, if he wished to secure a bedroom to himself. He got up and was moving into the house when Linda called to him, over her shoulder:

"Oh, Lewis!"

He waited.

"You didn't see Antonier anywhere on the way up, did you?"

"No."

"God knows where she can have got to," piously commented Linda. "Albert seems to think it's my fault, if you please! I tell him, if he wants those girls looked after, he'd better put them to school somewhere. Not that any decent school would keep them a week; but that's another matter."

"A young lady is lost?" inquired Trigorin, who was a little fogged. "One of your family?"

"One of Albert's children," replied the lady. "Not mine, you'll please to remember, Mr. Trigorin."

"She'll turn up," said Lewis at the door. "These children all fall on their feet. Look at Sebastian!"

"She's not a child; that's just where it is. She's sixteen past," retorted Linda, adding ruminatively: "Little cat!"

Lewis left them and went into the large, open hall which served the family as dining room. Through it a door led into the music room, an almost empty chamber with a dais at one end and a

grand piano. Here Kate stood before an open window, her hands held out before her and lightly clasped, while she took in deep breaths and let them out in long, high notes. They were full, clear, honest notes, very like Kate herself, who was the most honest thing alive. Her mother, Sanger's first wife, had been Australian—clean, respectable, middle class, hard working and kind. Kate persisted in being all these things, in spite of her upbringing. She had none of the wildness of her half-brothers and sisters. She had rosy cheeks and neat brown hair, was trim and comely, and wore shirt blouses. Her voice was promising and she worked strenuously, hoping, with her father's backing, to succeed some day upon the operatic stage. She also ran the household and did all the work which the single manservant could not do. Every one respected and liked her. She was a little obtuse, but this was probably the salvation of her, since it enabled her to disregard the inconsistencies of her own life. A more perceptive young woman could hardly have gone on being so modest, sensible, and affectionate without a little encouragement from her surroundings.

Lewis listened for a few seconds and called down the room: "Very nice indeed, Kate."

"Oh, it's you? We'd given up expecting you. Have you got the thing for us to act on father's birthday?"

Kate and her brother Caryl gave their father his proper title. It was only Evelyn's children who referred to him carelessly as Sanger.

"I finished it this morning," said Lewis. "We can begin rehearsing after lunch."

"But the tiresome thing is that we can't begin without Tony, and we don't know where she is. Didn't you hear?"

"I heard she was off somewhere."

"I hope she's all right," observed Kate, looking anxious. "I don't like it.

You know, she's awfully silly sometimes."

Lewis did know, and secretly thought that Antonia was bound to get into a scrape sooner or later. But he did not wish to distress Kate by saying so, and, to change the topic, remarked:

"By the way, I brought a fat Russian ballet dancer up with me. I picked him up in the inn at Erfurt."

"Mr. Trigorin? Yes, I know. Father invited him in the way he does, you know. I do hope he'll be civil to him. He's so furious with him for coming. He couldn't remember who he was at first, when he got the letter. Where is he now?"

"On the veranda."

"Oh! Is Linda there?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

Kate grew pink, but all she said was:

"Then I needn't bother about him. What is he like?"

"He looks," said Lewis viciously, "like one of those men who exhibit performing fleas. And that's all he is; on a wider scale, of course. He's done well out of it. Linda likes his clothes."

"Oh, dear! Perhaps he won't stay long! Father is fearfully busy writing a new last act to 'The Mountains.' Often he's up all night and Caryl, too. Caryl's had to put all his own work aside, poor dear. And the worst of it is, father's too ill to be working at all. I'm sure he is, and so is Caryl. You'll be shocked when you see him. He looks all wasted and shrunken up sometimes, and his eyes so yellow and bloodshot. He gets queer, giddy turns, but he says it's only because he's thirsty!"

"Can't you make him see a doctor?" asked Lewis anxiously.

"No. He says perhaps he will when we leave here, if he isn't better. He's very difficult. Men are really perfectly impossible sometimes."

"Yes, aren't they? I quite agree.

But look here! Where am I going to sleep? Who else is here?"

"Nobody. But the family is spread all over the house, and father turned Linda out of his room the other night and said she could go and sleep by herself until he had finished 'The Mountains.' I've put Mr. Trigorin in the spare room. Of course it's got two beds in it——"

"No, Kate. I'll sleep on the doorstep, but not with the flea trainer. Is there nowhere else?"

"Well, there's the little room in the annex. It's very small and it's never been disinfected since Tony and Tessa had scarlet fever there two years ago. I meant to burn a sulphur candle, but I forgot. Do you mind?"

"Not a bit. Germs are better than Trigorin any day."

"And it's tiresome going out there if it rains. However, if you don't mind—— Let's go across and have a look at it."

CHAPTER III.

In spite of Sanger's contempt for England, the mothers of the children at the Karindehütte had all been British. Vera Brady, his first wife, had been the leading lady of a third-rate opera company of which he was *chef d'orchestre*. He was then quite a young man and remarkably unsuccessful. They had gone on tour in the Antipodes, were married at Honolulu, and knocked about the world together for a good many years. She was an excellent woman, with a fine voice, and extreme powers of endurance; her devotion to Sanger kept her beside him through misfortune, hardship, and neglect. Of her children none survived their precarious infancy save the two youngest. These were born during a period of comparative prosperity when Sanger, who had begun to attract attention, held for a short time a permanent post in a German town with a famous conserva-

torium. Vera was able to quit the stage and set up the respectable household for which she had always craved. All her instincts were domestic and she was very happy for a time, bustling round her little flat and passing the time of day with congenial housewives at church and market. Caryl was born and she was able to rear him in peace and decency. She believed that her other children had died because she had been forced to work so hard in those nightmare years, when she had nursed her babies hastily, in drafty dressing rooms, awaiting her call. Caryl lived, and grew plump and strong, and was a comfort to her.

This interlude was brief; new troubles soon gathered round her. Sanger's infidelities had become almost a commonplace in their wandering life, but she had always been able to fly from gossip and at least she was sure that each episode must be brief. Once or twice he had run away from her, but he always came back. Now that she was planted in one town she could no longer ignore the scandalous legends which collected round his name. It was hinted to her that the place would soon be too hot to hold him, and though she persistently shut her eyes and ears she could not help knowing all about Miss Evelyn Churchill. The entire district was ringing with it.

This young lady was Sanger's pupil. She had come from England to study music and report had it that she was of very good family. She was talented, beautiful, and Sanger's junior by twenty years, but she had lost her head and her heart and she was advertising the fact in the high-handed way peculiar to women of breeding who are bent upon flying in the face of accepted convention. The affair became an open scandal and the Churchill family threatened to come to Germany and stop it. The young lady replied by going to Venice, taking Sanger with her.

Poor Vera, brooding in the little home where she had expected to be so happy, began to decide that life was altogether too hard for her. She was not proof against this last blow. Sanger's affairs were not, usually, of a sort to occupy him for long, but Miss Churchill was a rival of a different order. She was exceptionally intelligent, her health and beauty were not impaired by long years of hardship, and she loved him to distraction. He had no further need for Vera, and the thought broke a heart which should by rights have cracked some fifteen years before.

Yet he did come back, upon the day that Kate was born. He had left a number of manuscripts in his wife's keeping and wanted to collect them from her. She told him, not unkindly, that she was dying, and it soon became clear that she spoke the truth. Her constitution had been undermined by past privations; she had made up her mind, fatally, that she should not survive the birth of her baby. She spoke of Evelyn without rancor.

"That young lady," she said, "will you marry her when I'm gone?"

Sanger, looking rather foolish, said he did not know.

"Well, then don't, Albert," whispered Vera. "Promisé me that you won't, now!"

"All right," he said agreeably.

"I've never known you to keep a promise yet," the tired voice toiled on, "but I'm glad to hear you say it. Not that she wouldn't be good to my babies; I feel somehow that she would, which is more than I'd say of many women. But she's no wife for you, Albert. She's been bred soft, poor thing! And I don't wish her harm. I forgive her. I'd be sorry to think she should come to any harm. Mind you're not to marry her, Albert."

The good creature died and Albert immediately broke his promise. He

married Miss Churchill in a very few weeks in consequence of a certain pressure from her brothers, who had come out to put an end to the affair and who stayed to pay Sanger's debts and hurry up the wedding.

Evelyn, whose chief merit was a kind of reckless generosity, readily undertook the charge of Caryl and Kate and continued to love them when her own children came. She faced life in those early days with an audacious levity. Sanger had lost his work, but they had not yet got through all her money.

In the course of time she stopped making jokes. Her lot was the harder because she had been, as Vera put it, bred soft. But she met odds with an uncomplaining courage and always recognized that she had only herself to blame for the dishonor, poverty, and pain which were her fate. In a multitude of disasters she revealed a constant fortitude, and to the end, though a little battered by ill-fortune, she never quite lost the carriage of a gentlewoman. After bearing four children in six years she contracted heart disease and died rather suddenly upon the eve of her thirtieth birthday.

The household entered thereafter upon a period of storms and changes until Sanger fell in with Linda, who looked like a permanency. She had the strength of mind to ignore completely her six step-children, and for Caryl she even entertained a vague sort of affection. He had grown up into a handsome boy, very like his mother and sister in temper and complexion. His disposition was excellent; from an early age he managed all his father's business and financial affairs, kept him out of debt as far as possible, and transcribed his manuscripts. In his rare intervals of leisure he wrote music on his own account, but very little attention was paid by the family to his career. He and Kate propped up the crazy household between them and were privately

agreed as to its dreadfulness. Linda was grateful to them and tolerated the others.

Lately, however, a new cause for disturbance had arisen. Linda had begun to feel aggrieved at the ripening beauty of Antonia and disliked having to go about with her. This eldest of Evelyn's children was by far the most handsome; she was born before retribution had fully overtaken her mother, and did not look as delicate as the rest. She was full of a changeful color and brilliance, though her bloom was but just beginning and she had still the coltlike movements, the long limbs and loose joints of a very young creature. To the experienced eye her promise was infinite. She had a lovely, vivid little face, with strange, grayish eyes, silky brows, and a white forehead. Her mouth was childish and unformed, but the long curve of cheek and chin, the tilt of the nostrils, and the smooth modeling of the temples revealed a finely constructed skull, a beauty which was bone deep and which would survive the loss of youth. In character she also resembled her mother: was unbalanced, proud, and at times impossibly generous. But she lacked Evelyn's courage and was reckless rather than intrepid. She could only take a risk by deceiving herself as to its issue, and confronted by a reality she always went to pieces. She cried when she could not get what she wanted, boasted when she was frightened, and was, like her sisters, a deplorable little slattern.

She turned up at the Karindehütte on the afternoon of Trigorin's arrival in a very uncertain state of mind, having been absent for a week. Unsure of the attitude of her family, she would not go in by the veranda for fear of meeting Linda. She slipped round to the back of the house and climbed through a window into the music room, where she found Teresa and Paulina sitting on the dais step and devouring cherries.

Immediately she put on a kind of defensive swagger and strolled carelessly across the room as though she had never been away at all. Her sisters opened their eyes very wide indeed and asked where she had been.

To give herself time she sat down beside them, snatched a handful of cherries from the basket, and stuffed them into her mouth. Then she mumbled:

"Oh—in München."

"München!" cried the others. "Who on earth did you stay with?"

She spat out her stones and would not answer; but, when they asked incredulously whether it was Ikey Mo, she nodded.

"Himmel!" gasped Teresa and Paulina together.

They referred to a young man, a friend of Sanger's, whose real name was Jacob Birnbaum, but whom they had christened Ikey Mo on account of his nose and his shin bones. To this nickname he had not submitted with the best grace in the world. He was, for reasons of his own, naturalized a British subject; he dressed like an American, and talked four languages correctly, but without much command of idiom. He belonged to an immensely rich family and had no regular profession, though he dabbled a good deal in finance. The reigning interest in his life was music; he sometimes acted as a sort of *entrepreneur* in the arts, financing genius if he thought it would repay him. It nearly always did, for his admirable taste was supplemented by the sharp, forcible intelligence of his race.

His connection with Sanger, however, had brought him no financial profit; he had even lost money over his friend's productions and he was quite content to do so. For he had his ideals. He almost worshiped Sanger; regarded him as the greatest musician of the century—as one of those magnificent, unique figures which do not inspire every generation.

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In appearance he was not pretty, being short, fair, and very stout. But he had benevolent little eyes, and a fine, thoughtful forehead. The Sanger children knew him very well, for he had a flat in Munich and often came up to the Karindehütte. Also he had spent part of the spring with them in Italy, giving Sanger advice about some copyrights. Teresa, casting her mind back, remembered that he had looked a good deal at Antonia, as he sat entertaining Linda in their Genoese garden.

Paulina was asking:

"Did you have a good time?"

"O—oh, yes! A lovely time! Anything I said I wanted, Ike got it for me at once. He just gave me anything I asked for. We used to go along the street and look at all the shops, and if we came to a flower shop he took me in and ordered all I wanted. And once in a sweet shop there was a basket in the window, all made of chocolate with marzipan fruits and gold ribbons; and I said I'd like that. And he said all right, and got it. And then, just to have him on, I said I wanted an enormous wedding cake in three tiers. But he said: 'Oh, if you want it you can have it. It will be very——'"

She broke off and bit her lip.

"Did you bring any sweets back with you, Tony?" asked Paulina eagerly.

"Little greedy! No! I ate so many I got sick. So I gave them all to some children in the cellars. But Ike would have given me more if I'd wanted. He'd have given me anything. And we had lovely meals; sometimes in restaurants and sometimes sent in. Last night we had a *vol-au-vent*, and asparagus, and lobsters, and an iced bomb and peaches, and Ike had a saddle of mutton as well. And we had champagne. I was drunk every night."

"Well, I don't wonder he's so fat if he eats all that," jeered Teresa.

"That's what I told him. I used to say, very loudly, in restaurants and

places: 'Now I know why you are so fat.' And all the people laughed. I said it in every language I knew. He got quite annoyed. He doesn't like jokes about his figure."

"I wonder he kept you then," said Paulina.

"Well, I said to him: 'If you don't like what I say, I'll go home. I can go this minute if I want to. Nobody can stop me.' So of course he had to put up with it."

"Did he give you that hat?"

Antonia wore the very ragged cotton gown in which she had left her home. But she had acquired a fine, flimsy town hat made of black lace with a wreath of gold flowers.

"No," she said. "I bought it with my birthday money. Do you like it?"

"It's rather vulgar," said Teresa. "But it suits you."

Antonia took it off and pinched the tawdry flowers lovingly. Her sisters exclaimed in excitement:

"Why, you've got your hair up!"

"Yes," she said carelessly. "Ike said I'd better."

She had drawn it all off her forehead and pinned it at the back of her head. It was a style which revealed the subtle shadows and curves of brow and temple, giving her an appearance of character and intellect which the low-brimmed hat had destroyed. The calm, youthful beauty of her forehead contrasted strangely with the evasive defiance of her eyes, heavy with the weariness of a week's frantic dissipation. She sat for a while making nervous grimaces, and then announced:

"We went to the opera every night."

"Oh! Was it tolerable?" asked Teresa, with very fair imitation of Lewis in his least agreeable manner.

"Of course it was. It was very beautiful music. Only Ike has strange tastes. Just fancy! He likes Wagner! I told him that we don't. I said that all savage races like loud noises."

She paused to laugh heartily at this gibe, and Paulina asked in a puzzled voice:

"But what did he have you there for if you were so rude? I don't understand. What did he get out of it?"

Antonia broke in hastily: "Do you know he says I've the loveliest voice he's ever heard in his life! He says I'm miles better than Kate; he says I've got more temperament than Kate and my interpretations are more sympathetic. So that's one for Kate, isn't it? Always stodging away! She'll never do anything very much, I expect."

"He was just making fun of you," said Teresa. "Or else he's as mad as you are. Because no sane man could think that you sing better than Kate."

"You know you'll have a terrible time with Sanger," said Paulina. "He said he'd beat you when you came back; and I don't know what he'll say when he hears what you've done. What will you tell him?"

"Nothing, or Linda either. I don't think he'll ask. He never asks questions unless he's sure he's going to like the answer."

This was true and the little girls nodded. She went on:

"I expect it will be all right. Ike came back with me, you know. He's up with Sanger now, and he brought him some cognac for a present. That ought to put him in a good temper. I advised him to bring it and he said it was a good idea, but he was still afraid that Caryl might call him out. So I said: 'Caryl never does silly things and that would be silly. Because if he started fighting over us his life wouldn't be worth a sick headache by the time Soo-zanne's grown up.' And Ike said that was probably true. I told him I didn't wonder he was frightened, for he'd make a splendid target. And Caryl's a good shot. If he fought anybody, he'd kill them, I think. I shouldn't like poor little Ike to be killed.

But I don't see why Caryl should mind, do you?"

Teresa said crushingly: "Did you walk all about München with that enormous hole in your stocking? I wonder Ike put up with it!"

Antonia turned over her little foot and looked at it. Most of her pink heel stuck out of her stocking. She said instantly:

"Ike gave me stockings. He gave me twelve pair, all silk and all different colors."

"Fancy taking clothes from him!"

"I didn't. I threw them out of the window. I asked him what he took me for. And they all got caught in the telegraph wires, and the people in the street looked so surprised. It was windy, you know, and they waved about like little flags. I laughed till I nearly fell out of the window myself."

"Liar!"

"I did. It's true. I said to Ike: 'If I have a hole in my stocking, what's that to you? My clothes are my own affair, I should hope. If I'm not grand enough for you to take me out, leave me alone and I'll go home.' And he said I could throw them out of the window if I liked. So I threw them. And he said he didn't mind."

She pulled herself up with a little gasp as if she had again stumbled upon a recollection which terrified her. But she went on, boastfully elaborating the details of her escapade and heaping insults upon Birnbaum as though by abuse she could revenge the humiliation of her surrender. She seemed to be bent upon representing him in as ridiculous a light as possible, and Lewis, who joined them in time to hear some of her most highly colored sallies, was struck by their apt cruelty—at the edge which this episode seemed to have put upon her somewhat primitive wit. He sat on the piano stool, applauding her waggery and encouraging her to fresh efforts until something in her desperate

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spirits made him uneasy. He observed her more closely, got a glimpse of the disaster in her eyes, and laughed no more; turning round abruptly he began to play the piano and ended the conversation. The girls, immediately silent, listened to him with the grave attention which his music merited. He played sitting very stiff and upright, staring thoughtfully at the notes with a faint, preoccupied smile. The immobility of his body seemed to contribute somehow to the violent activity of his hands as he flung them about the keyboard. He had charged into the last movement in the "Appassionata," and for some minutes the room was full of its resistless, onward sweep. Then he broke off, commanding Paulina, with some irritation, not to breathe down his neck.

"Finish it, Lewis," cried Antonia. "Play the presto bit."

"I can't play that piece," he demurred. "It's too difficult."

"Oh, Lewis! How can you? I've often heard you."

"Well," said Teresa maliciously, "I must say I've heard it better done."

He spun round on the music stool as if somebody had stuck a pin into him, and looked at her. She gave him such an innocent little grin that he could not help laughing. He said that they had better lose no time in rehearsing "Breakfast with the Borgias," now that Antonia was back, and went off to fetch it. Paulina said:

"He didn't like you saying that you'd heard the 'Appassionata' better done, Tessa."

"Well, he shouldn't have said it was too difficult for him in that silly voice. It was just to show off. I can't help teasing him when he asks for it like that."

"I wish," said Antonia with a shiver, "that he wouldn't look at a person as if he saw all in one second everything that had ever happened to them."

"It doesn't matter," stated Teresa.

"He only thinks of his own concerns. The other things he hastily forgets, so they sha'n't get on his mind."

Lewis reappeared with the score, which he propped up on the piano, saying:

"Now I propose to play over the tunes to you until you know them and you can supply your own words. Who will be *Cesare Borgia*? He's a tenor."

"Roberto," said Paulina. "He's got the best voice here."

"And Ikey Mo must be *Pope*," broke in Antonia. "It will suit him so very well."

"Oh! He's here, is he?" asked Lewis.

"Upstairs with Sanger."

"Good! He can double the parts of *Pope* and *Friar*. They don't come on together. Then the flea' trainer—what's his name? Linda's follower—Trigorin—he can be the servant, *Scaramello*. It'll be just the part for him. He has a good deal of business with a poisoned toothpick. Just fetch him, Tessa! You'll find him, I expect, on the veranda. And you, Lina, produce Roberto for me."

Teresa ran out and found Trigorin engaged in desultory conversation with Linda. He was looking a trifle crestfallen and uneasy; he had been disappointed not to see Sanger at lunch. Lewis and Kate had discussed "The Mountains" across him, without taking any notice of his attempts to join in. Their conversation reminded him of all his joyful anticipations as he drove up the valley and roused him from the brief delirium occasioned by Linda's blue eyes. He had not climbed this heavy hill merely to make himself agreeable to a fine woman. She would be very well anywhere else, but here she was not seemly, and to become entangled with her would be to profane the dreams which he had woven about this visit. She found him much less promising after lunch.

He jumped up with alacrity when he heard that Lewis wanted him and followed Teresa as she skipped back into the house. He was radiantly at their service, but his face fell when he heard that they wanted him to sing.

"It is impossible," he exclaimed. "I cannot sing."

"Everybody has got to," said Lewis. "You needn't be a Caruso. No! None of your modesty! Here, sing this!"

He played the opening bars of *Scaramello's* song. Trigorin stood, fat and mute, spreading out hands of deprecation.

"I cannot," he repeated.

"Sing this then," commanded Lewis, playing the first bar.

Trigorin produced a voice so small and reedy that Teresa and Paulina rolled on the floor with laughter.

"No, you're quite right, you can't sing," said Lewis crossly. "But who is to take the part then?"

"I could play?" suggested Trigorin diffidently. "Then you, perhaps, shall sing."

"Play? I doubt it. It's all in pencil and vilely written at that. It would be sheer guess work."

"To me it will be clear," Trigorin assured him. "Often I must read such scores."

And, sitting down, he began to play the little overture with great smoothness and spirit, interpreting the scrawls which stood for chords without much difficulty. Lewis listened impatiently and then said:

"Yes, that'll do. But don't play it as if it was Chopin!"

Trigorin began to play much louder, as the only amendment he could think of. Teresa, who had been admiring the excited agility of his fat hands, put an arm round Lewis' neck and drew his head close down to hers.

"Lewis," she whispered, derisively confidential, "sometimes, you know, you talk—poppycock!"

He pulled her ears and called her something unrepeatable, but he went over to Trigorin and told him how much obliged they all were for his timely skill in playing for them. Trigorin beamed and played louder than ever.

"Now," said Lewis, "I'll be *Scaramello*. So we needn't rehearse the opening song. Where's Roberto?"

"Please?" said Roberto, who had been waiting politely by the door until called for.

He was a small, thin Italian, clad invariably in blue-linen overalls. He had a brown, good-natured face, with a little beard and mustache. He was devoted to all the Sangers. He did the whole work of the house and undertook any odd job that turned up, darned Sanger's socks, prepared Linda's bath, and interviewed the press.

"Listen, Roberto," said Lewis. "Can you act?"

"Scusa!"

"Which of you girls can talk Italian? Tony! You explain to him what he's got to do. You, Trigorin, play him his tune. Get him along to *Lucrezia's* entrance. It's marked on the score, there. Where's Kate? I want her. She must be *Lucrezia*."

"Oh, Lewis! Let me be!" cried Antonia. "Kate can't act."

"She can sing. I won't have my music spoiled. No, Tony."

He went to the door and shouted for Kate.

"But she'll ruin the part, Lewis."

"Not a bit of it."

"She can't interpret. She's got no temperament."

"All the better," said Lewis dryly. "Temperament is like vinegar in a salad; a little goes a long way. I'd sooner have none than too much. Kate! Where are you?"

"Oh, Lewis, do let me be! I can sing! I can, really! Everybody says I've come on a lot."

"They may, Tony. I don't say you sing badly. But Kate sings better."

"Oh, well, then! I hope she'll spoil your silly old play. Standing stuck in the middle of the stage looking like a sofa cushion like she always does. I never heard anything funnier in all my life than Kate trying to act *Lucrezia Borgia*."

"Birnbaum as *Pope* will be much funnier. No! Kate must be our diva. You must be her victim; a beautiful creature who is poisoned and dies writhing. You'll like that, won't you? You can work off a temperamental contrast to Kate's stolid villainy."

"Oh, well," said Antonia, somewhat mollified. "But what will Tessa and Lina be?"

"Tessa must be the confidential waiting maid and Lina and Sebastian are to be pages. They've a duet."

"And what about Suzanne? Had you forgotten her? Oh, that doesn't matter. We don't want her."

Lewis clapped a hand to his head in dismay and exclaimed:

"If I hadn't forgotten Soo-zanne. Will your father—"

"Sanger won't mind her being left out," Paulina assured him. "He nearly is sick when she sings and so are we."

"Very well. There isn't time to alter it, anyhow. Kate!"

"She cook supper," volunteered Roberto. "She say she come after or you get nothing to eat."

"What a plague! Well, I'll take her later, and Caryl, too. He is our heavy bass. We must do what we can now without them. Come, Tessa! You and I have a love scene together. If you'll come down to the end of the room with me I'll hum you the tune and we'll concoct the words, while Trigorin coaches Roberto."

They went and sat in a distant window, composing their libretto with a good deal of hilarity. She supplied the

rhymes, while he attended to the meter, and they soon became very ribald indeed. Presently Roberto, who was getting hold of his part, struck a tremendous attitude and burst into his first air. As he sang he stalked about the stage with fiery Italian gestures.

"There," said Lewis. "That is exactly what I want. You will all of you observe that this is a very Latin piece. This fellow does it to perfection. Copy him and you'll please me. That'll do, Roberto. Up with you, Tessa, and we'll sing our duet."

They mounted the dais. Trigorin's hands softened on the keys as Teresa's little treble and Lewis' inconspicuous baritone rose through the room. Neither had much voice, but they sang with spirit, and it was obvious that Teresa was straining to do her very best. In that house she could do no less. Music there was a sacred thing; perhaps the only sacred thing. Even in an absurd charade like this it might not be cheapened by carelessness or economy of effort. The Sanger children were ignorant of obedience, application, self-command, or reverence save in this one cause. And of Lewis the same thing might have been said.

He was looking wild and weary. His red hair, damp with sweat, was pushed up into a crest on the top of his head. He had flung aside all his waistcoats and the muffler and was directing the rehearsal in his shirt sleeves. Having Teresa in his arms, he was making love to her with a businesslike competence which showed that he had quite forgotten for the moment who she really was. He was busy listening to the effect of the duet and considering the sequence of this song with the next; in his preoccupation he hardly remembered that she was not the Roman waiting wench for whom he had written the part. His eyes were grave and intent, and saw nothing at all, but in voice and

gesture he was using the absent-minded mastery of a practiced lover. Teresa did not like such handling; she was no actress and could not throw herself into her part sufficiently for its demands. A certain stolidity in her, an absence of the invariable response, brought him to himself with a start; he remembered that he had got poor little Tessa and not the full-blooded contadina he had framed. He laughed at her reassuringly, and finished the scene with a kind of bantering gayety which put her at her ease.

They worked away until Susan, sidling round the door, told them that supper was ready. Very hungry and happy they all trooped into the hall, where Kate, flushed and disheveled, was helping soup from an enormous tureen. Linda, already seated at the table, had begun her meal. She raised her eyes contemptuously to look at the musicians, but at the sight of Antonia she remained fixed in a stare.

"Oh!" she said slowly. "So you've come back?"

"Yes. I've come back. What soup is it, Kate?"

"We mayn't ask where you've been, I suppose," asked Linda.

"I've been on a visit."

"Oh, indeed! I hope you enjoyed yourself."

"Very much, thank you."

"You never know," murmured Linda thoughtfully. "Sometimes girls don't enjoy visits as much as they think they will. Sometimes they come back—quite changed."

"Will Sanger be down to supper, Kate?" interrupted Lewis hastily.

"Yes," said Kate. "Jacob Birnbaum is with him. I went up to tell them and they are just coming down."

"Jacob," stated Linda, "came the same time Tony did. You'll tell me, I suppose, that you didn't travel together."

Antonia took no notice and began to eat her soup.

"She's been stopping with 'im," piped Susan. "I heard her telling Tessa and Lina. Ah—oh—mammy! Tessa pinched me!"

"Little beast! Will you leave the child alone!" exclaimed Linda, angrily leaning forward to box Teresa's ears. "Come here, Suzanne, and tell us what you heard."

"Tessa and Lina was eating cherries and they wouldn't give me any and shut me out of the room. So I climbed up into the balcony and listened to everything they said to spite them. And Tony came in and said she'd been stopping at Ike's flat——"

"Yes? Be quiet, Lewis, please! I want to hear this. Kate! I wonder at you, interrupting in that rude way. You can tell Mr. Trigorin about the landslide afterward. Just all of you be quiet and let me hear this. Go on, lovey! What next?"

"She's a little liar!" burst out Antonia. "I never said anything of the sort, did I, girls?"

"No!" asserted her sisters loyally.

"Didn't you? We'll see. When Suzanne's finished telling me all she heard she can repeat it over again to your father."

At that moment Sanger appeared at the head of the stairs, an enormous, infirm figure. His son Caryl supported him. Jacob Birnbaum strolled thoughtfully along the passage behind them and peered over their shoulders at the scene going on in the hall below. Linda rose and pointed at Antonia.

"Look at her, Albert!" she bawled. "Just look at her. She's come back, if you please. D'you want to know what she's been up to?"

Sanger descended the stairs with difficulty, leaning heavily on Caryl's arm and preceded by Gelert, his boarhound. Birnbaum, looking a trifle nervous, brought up the rear of this procession.

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Lewis and Trigorin forgot Antonia and her troubles in the shocked surprise with which they viewed their host. In the months that had elapsed since they saw him last, disease and decay had made rapid advances. His huge frame looked shrunken: the flesh sagged heavily on a face half hidden by grizzled hair. The splendid vitality of the man was gone, leaving this mountainous wreck, blinking at them with dim, bloodshot eyes.

When he reached the hall Linda began to upbraid him and Antonia, calling them by every discreditable name in her very extensive vocabulary. Lewis and Birnbaum, used to these scenes, greeted each other with long faces and tried to create a diversion by announcing that the corkscrew had been lost. But Sanger paid no heed to any of them; he continued to stare at his daughter as if waiting for her to speak. She had gone very white, but was steadily drinking her soup as if nothing had happened.

"Well, my girl," he said at last, "I had intended to beat you when you got home. But it's too much trouble; too—much—trouble. Besides, I'm hungry."

And he collapsed into his chair at the head of the table.

"When I'm less busy," he promised Linda, "I'll institute a disciplinary system. I'll thrash all the girls for half an hour every morning, including Susan."

And he shot a ferocious look at his youngest, who shivered in her chair, though, as a matter of fact, she was the only child in the house who escaped his blows.

"Thrash all the girls every day?" asked Sebastian, who had joined them in time to hear this remark. "What for?"

"For their bad behavior," replied their father. "Beating, Sebastian, is the only remedy. You can beat Susan if you like."

"I would like," said Sebastian.

"If the men of this family coöperate, we may manage to introduce a little order into the household. Caryl shall beat Kate."

"Kate doesn't need it," said Sebastian gravely.

"I dare say not. But a little undeserved beating does them no harm. Kate will be all the better for it."

And Sanger looked affectionately into Kate's distressed face and asked her for some soup.

"You'd better let Jacob beat Antonia," said Linda sourly. "He's been keeping her this past week."

"Is that so?" Sanger shifted his morose regard from his daughter to his friend. "Is that so, Jacob?"

"I hope that you have no objection," said Birnbaum, with as much effrontery as he could muster. "Some day, perhaps, some more of the children will come down. We amused ourselves so much. But Tony was anxious to be at home for the birthday."

Sanger sighed gustily and said:

"Very friendly of you, Jacob!"

At which Birnbaum looked uncomfortable. Antonia, lifting her head for the first time, looked at her father and then at Birnbaum with stony, scornful eyes. In the uneasy pause which ensued the voice of Trigorin was heard in a speech which had gone on, unheeded, ever since Sanger appeared on the stairs.

"There is no privilege," he was saying, "which I have more desired than to be a guest at this house."

"Bless my soul! Trigorin!" exclaimed Sanger. "I'd forgotten you were here. I must apologize. But you're a family man yourself, I believe, so you're probably accustomed to this sort of thing. I hope Kate is making you comfortable. Look! Have you met Birnbaum?"

But Trigorin did not want to talk to

Birnbaum, who was, obviously, no musician. And Birnbaum did not want to talk to any one. He occupied himself sulkily in pulling corks and glancing furtively at Antonia. Sanger was very silent and ate little. He sat staring at his plate in such a moody abstraction, heaving such melancholy sighs, that nobody liked to speak to him. Lewis talked to Caryl in undertones, the children giggled at their end of the table, and Trigorin was thrown once more upon the melting glances of Linda.

The gloomy meal proceeded calmly enough save for a scene in which Paulina and Sebastian were ordered from the room. But even this was accomplished without the tumult and gusto of other days. Sanger had lost his love of life. He was a sick man, absorbed in his last desperate struggle; too ill to resent the conduct of his children and his friends. He could not rouse himself to any protest. Toward the end of supper, however, having drunk a good deal of the cognac which Birnbaum had brought him, he brightened up a little. He began to tease Lewis about the "Revolutionary Songs," and told how at an early rehearsal the tenors had taken their first lead a bar late and how they had remained a bar late throughout the piece, whereat Lewis determined that it sounded better that way. Later in the evening he became very good company indeed and told them funny stories about Brahms. For an hour he was himself again, and his friends forgot their gloom; they caught the old sense of space and heroic joviality—felt that they were assisting at something epic and earning a sort of immortality simply by listening to Sanger and laughing with him. But as the night advanced he became less intelligible, and when Caryl and Lewis took him up to bed he was speechless. Trigorin and Birnbaum, who did not find much to say to each other, retired to the spare bedroom which they were to share.

CHAPTER IV.

Jacob Birnbaum stood behind a screen which formed one of the wings in "a room in the Vatican." His intelligent forehead was smothered beneath three tea cosies, placed one upon the other, to form a papal crown. The rest of his person was muffled in an ancient Spanish cope. He made a sufficiently impressive *Borgia*. Upon the stage the Dodd opera was in full swing and Trigorin was rattling away at the piano. Antonia was dying in as Latin a manner as she could compass, her long hair trailing over the shoulder of Roberto, who made a most polite little cardinal, in Kate's red dressing gown. He supported the poisoned lady as she swung through her final swift, suave, heart-rending air, and when she had breathed her last put her on the floor almost at Birnbaum's feet. She lay there very pink and pleased with herself, her eyes tightly shut in an innocent attempt to look convincingly dead.

The man in the wings stared down at her somberly, his mind ranging back unhappily over all that had befallen the pair of them since that day, scarcely a month ago, when he had looked at her picking freesias in the garden at Genoa and discovered, with a sense of dazed shock, the enchantment of her loveliness and youth. That day had been the beginning of his madness. At the thought of the havoc she had made in his peace of mind he could almost wish that she was really lying dead at his feet. If she were dead, she could not be more lost to him. Should this sweet, tormenting thing die and be buried, be thrust away under the mold, he might forget her. But while the living, revengeful spirit which had eluded him gazed upon him with her eyes and mocked him with her tongue he could never hope for tranquillity.

Because she had seemed to promise Paradise, and because he was accus-

tomed to get what he wanted, he had persuaded her, with promises of lavish entertainment, to come to Munich. The business had been most pitifully easy. Only, in return, she had made a fool of him; she had opened his eyes so completely to the illusion of all possession that he doubted if he should ever again enjoy anything without an after-taste of bitterness. She had given him none of the bliss he had anticipated; and long before the end of the week he knew that he had made an irremediable mistake, that his need had been for some moment of shared passion, some appeasement of his loneliness, some sign that she returned his feeling. He would gladly have relinquished his brief, unsubstantial victory, if that were possible, for some hint that he was in any way necessary to her happiness. But an implacable remorse told him that by his own folly he had lost her.

Upon the stage *Scaramello*, the servant, was being instructed to throw her into the Tiber. He picked her up and carried her behind the screen. When he had set her carefully upon her feet she opened her eyes with a laugh which ended abruptly, since she found herself so close to Jacob Birnbaum. Shrinking back she eyed him defiantly, and he, stung by a sudden, unendurable pain, returned her glance with a smile of deliberate insolence which sent her pale with fury. Lewis, watching them, thought that they made a pretty pair; he shuddered a little at them. He did not like to think what dark things must have passed between them at Munich that they should still choose to remain in each other's company for the sake, apparently, of mutual torment. He turned his back on them and, since his head that day was completely in the clouds, he soon forgot them.

The even flow of his own music pleased and soothed him, but he found that he could not listen to it in a spirit

of intelligent criticism. A strange helplessness had come upon him; he knew it for the first stage of a violent seizure of mental and spiritual activity. Very soon he would be thinking desperately, but at the moment he was obsessed and baffled by a vague conception, a form, the outlines of a new thing in his mind. While this veiled idea disturbed his peace he could not think connectedly upon any subject, since he must needs reject every image which was not the right one. He brooded absently—anxious, yet afraid of the moment when his thought should take shape.

Presently Birnbaum had to leave them and join the group on the stage. Lewis, standing with Antonia behind the screen, was jerked out of his absorption and exasperated beyond all reason when he discovered that she was in tears. He whispered fiercely over his shoulder:

"Stop making that noise, can't you?"

She felt herself that he ought not to be disturbed when he was listening to his own music, and with a meek gulp she replied:

"I'll try. Can you lend me a handkerchief?"

He thought he could. He searched his raiment and at last discovered a very dirty red cotton object which he gave her. Then he turned his back again while she quietly mopped her eyes, until the end of the piece set her free to run away and howl as loudly as she pleased.

He took his call, lost still in his uneasy preoccupation. He climbed onto the stage and bowed to an audience composed of Linda, Susan, Sanger, and the village schoolmaster. They crowded round him, and Linda said that she hadn't known he could write anything so pretty, and Sanger said that he was an amusing fellow. Trigorin clasped his hand in a couple of wet, white ones.

"It is admirable," he gasped. "You say it is to imitate the Italian opera?"

I say not. It is inspired by that school—yes—but also it is original. My dear sir, it is a work of genius!"

"Very good of you to say so," replied Lewis, trying to release himself. "You played well, Trigorin. I don't know how you managed to make out my scrawls."

"It was a pleasure—an honor. I like it so much. It is so beautiful, that little work. It has the true melody."

"Is it an advance on the 'Revolutionary Songs?'" asked Birnbaum, who was listening.

"But no," said Trigorin, shaking his head very seriously. "That I cannot say. This I like so much; but the others I like better. They also are the work of genius, but more heavy."

Lewis looked very much pained and intimated that he himself was inclined to consider "Breakfast with the Borgias" as the most profound effort he had yet made. It was a blow to him, he said, if Mr. Trigorin thought it superficial. He had succeeded in reducing his fellow guest to a perfectly speechless condition of embarrassment and mortification when Linda was heard to ask, in no mean voice, why a part had not been written for Susan.

"The child can sing in tune," she asserted. "And I'd like to know why she's been passed over."

"My dear Linda," expostulated Albert, "one must keep the thing even. We like a high standard in our family productions, but Susan's level is beyond the rest of us."

"I don't know why you should have such a spite against the poor little thing, I'm sure," complained Linda, fondling Susan. "As if it matters how a kiddie of that age does things! I don't see anything so wonderful, come to that, in the way that Lina and Sebastian sang their parts."

"There was nothing wonderful," said Sanger wearily, "except that they had the grace to take pains. If either of

them had dared to set up the con-founded little pipe which we hear from Susan I'd have stopped the piece. You never did, did you? I dare say not."

"I can tell you, Albert, there's plenty of people think differently. There was a gentleman down in Genoa that heard her sing and he said she was wonderful for her age. He said she'd inherited her talent, and he'd know her anywhere for Sanger's daughter. He said she'd go very far."

"Sanger's daughter! Heaven and earth! Sanger's daughter! Isn't it bad enough to have begotten anything like Susan? I'm ready to swear I never did. And now a gentleman in Genoa says she takes after me! An intolerable insult! Birnbaum! Will you listen to this? A gentleman in Genoa who heard Susan sing—Have you heard Susan sing, by the way? You haven't? Well, then, you shall. Pop up onto the platform, Sue, and give us a song. Let me see—what did you sing to the gentleman in Genoa? The flower song out of 'Faust'? I might have known it. Sing that! I dare say Trigorin will be able to play it for you."

"That's right, deary, it's your turn now to sing a bit," said Linda, who could not believe that any one should hear Susan sing and not find her very sweet.

Susan needed no encouragement. She was delighted with any sort of notice. She climbed onto the dais, pushed back her yellow curls, and began to warble in a shallow, sugary treble. Her facility, self-confidence, and inaccuracy were on a level with the amazing vulgarity of her performance. She paraded every cheap effect, every little trick most likely to outrage the pure taste of her relations: And yet there was a certain dash and assurance about her which explained the prophecy of the gentleman in Genoa. Sanger himself was inclined to fear that her push

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and her unscrupulous showiness would carry her further than the others and establish her as the star of the family. Hence his animosity; he could not bear that she should eclipse the patient, industrious talent of Caryl and Kate, or the fine brilliance of Evelyn's children. He scowled heavily all through her song.

But she, with a persistent, babyish simper, ignored this, and ignored also the loud noises whereby her younger brother and sisters indicated their nausea at the style of her performance. At the end she acknowledged the slightly ironic applause of her elders as though conscious of popularity, jumped down and ran to hide her face in her mother's lap, a pretty gesture which they had rehearsed in private.

"Little monkey!" observed Sanger wrathfully. "That's what I have to put up with. And she'll disgrace us on every platform in Europe before she's done. But I sha'n't know it. The worms will have me before then, thank God!"

He relapsed into gloom for a little while, and then said:

"Kate, my dear! Don't be shy. We're an indulgent audience and won't expect a second Susan of you. Couldn't you oblige us a little? We've not heard as much of you to-night as I'd like."

"I'm sorry," said Lewis. "I'd no idea Kate was turning into such a prima donna, or she should have had more songs of her very own. Do sing, Kate!"

Kate sang and they were all delighted with her. She sang one song after another to meet every taste, and ended with a somewhat ambitious composition of Caryl's, a setting to the lines: "*Du bist wie eine Blume!*" which was received by the family with varying appreciation since its sentiment was practically incomprehensible to most of them. At the end of it Lewis began to congratulate Caryl with such fulsome-

ness, so palpably in imitation of Trigorin, that all the children began to giggle. He was enlarging upon his privileges in being allowed to listen to a first performance of this detestable little work when Sanger, who felt that things were really going too far, went across to Trigorin and began to be civil to him. He praised his reading of the pencil score and explained how much obliged they all were. Trigorin beamed. It was the first conversational opening given to him by Sanger during this whole visit.

"It was easy," he said. "Often I must read music that is so badly written. It is very nice, this piece? Yes?"

"Humph!" said Sanger. "Very pretty fooling. It suited the cast, which was all that was required."

Trigorin, who had had a cross letter from his wife that morning, thought he saw an opportunity and rushed upon his fate.

"It is a diversion to write for an artist sometimes. It is amusing. My wife, she hopes that you will one day write a ballet for her—a little thing—"

Sanger stiffened and shot up his eyebrows.

"I'm honored," he said. "But I don't suppose I could write a ballet that would suit madame to save my life. Why not get Birnbaum here to write one? It's much more in his line."

"I did not know—" began Trigorin doubtfully, looking at the young Jew.

"You didn't know that he wrote music? Well, he hasn't written any yet. But he should. He should! And he owns several theaters. Look here, Birnbaum! Here's Trigorin wants one of us to write a ballet for madame. I tell him you'd better do it and produce it at one of your places."

"I think that Madame Zhigalova would not be pleased with my work," said Jacob. "Why does he not do it himself?"

"I cannot write music," said Trigorin sadly.

"Perhaps you could, if you tried. It is quite easy, is it not, my friend?"

"Quite," said Sanger, returning his grin. "Yes; it would be an excellent speculation to write all her ballets yourself, Trigorin."

"Don't listen to them, Mr. Trigorin," whispered Linda, behind him; "they're just laughing at you."

The baited man turned round and looked at her and remembered how much kinder she had been than any one else at the Karindehütte. She dropped her large, white eyelids and made a place for him beside her on the window seat. For a second he wavered, looking toward the piano where Sanger, Lewis, and Birnbaum were talking together; but he knew that they did not want him, so he sat down and surrendered himself to her. She could at least help him to forget his mortification; to his sorrowing spirit she brought an easy forgetfulness; she stirred his pulses and provoked no ideas either of good or of evil.

They embarked upon a whispered conversation full of long, significant pauses, as a pair of chess players will hesitate and ponder over the moves of a game. Their common goal was oblivion, escape from their several sorrows. For Linda, despite her placidity, had a sorrow—a sort of composite dread of poverty, insecurity, and increasing flesh; a fear of the future which was creeping over her life like a chilly fog; a vision of herself as an enormous old woman, starving to death.

The company meanwhile was breaking up. The schoolmaster took his leave and Lewis, attracted by the moonlight outside, strolled a little way down the hill with him. Sanger and Caryl went upstairs to begin on their night's work. Birnbaum, straying unhappily through the house, was looking for Antonia, though he did not in the least

know what he wanted to say if he found her. He stumbled over the two little girls sitting on the top step of the stairs and asked if they had seen her.

"She's in our room, Ike," said Paulina. "Crying like anything. She's been crying all the evening."

"Crying," he repeated, startled, yet a little hopeful. "That's a pity."

"She often cries," said Teresa without much concern.

"She's a regular cry-baby," added Paulina.

"So are you!" Teresa was moved to retort. "You both of you roar and yell at the least little thing."

"What is she crying for?" asked Jacob anxiously.

"Because Lewis wouldn't let her be *Lucesia Borgia*," they told him. "She was dreadfully hurt because he despised her singing."

"Sol!" he exclaimed in some disappointment, and took himself off to bed.

"It's no use us going up till Tony's quiet," said Paulina.

Teresa said nothing, but crouched at the top of the stairs, brooding disconsolately, her thin arms round her knees. Suddenly she had become intensely miserable. She stared down into the darkness of the hall, cut in two by the moonlight which streamed in through the open door. She could not bear it. She jumped up with a little cry of exasperation.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "How I hate it all!"

"Hate what?" asked Paulina mildly. "Everybody! Everything! I hate the whole world!"

"Everything does seem horrid this year," agreed Paulina sadly. "We don't seem to have the fun we used to."

"Good-by," said Teresa, setting off down the stairs.

"Where are you off to? Are you going out?"

"Yes! I must get out of this!"

She ran out to hide herself in the

mountains, frightened and furious, pursued by a desolate foreboding which seemed to fill the quiet house. As she stumbled up toward the pass she kept murmuring to herself:

"I wish I could die! I wish I was dead!"

She knew that she did not mean this; she was not in the least anxious to die. But the violence of such a statement seemed to satisfy her, just as it was a relief to run up hill.

CHAPTER V.

The top of the pass was such a quiet place that Teresa very soon recovered her peace of mind. She could see nothing of the trees or the world of men, since the valley leading down to Weissau was full of clouds. Above and around her was the sky, empty save for the moon. Mountain peaks stood up in that space, bare to the light. She was at a point where the track balanced itself for a moment on the ridge and then dived into an inky valley on the far side. From that blackness rose the echoing murmur of many waterfalls, so that the pit of night was full of sound. She stood, looking down, already calmer.

By the path was a small, wooden Calvary marking a spring.

She climbed a knoll, the highest point near by, and stared round her. In every direction she could see for miles and miles, but the view was simple, a succession of serene ranges sticking up into emptiness. The moon had painted them all a uniform black and white, and the sky was no color at all. It was a simplification which delighted her; she needed it. There were, usually, too many things. The people and colors and noises crowded her mind with ideas and confused her. Often she felt that she saw nothing clearly, but here, where there was so very little to see, it might be managed. She turned round to the

Königsjoch, which hung almost above her, and took a good look at it. Its stony crags, its snowfields, and the smooth, bare outline of its summit seemed almost near enough to touch, yet she knew them to be miles away. She stared hungrily, trying to stamp this image on her mind and thus secure it forever and ever. She became entranced with it. As she looked she had an idea, a passionate hope, which took her breath away. If she could ever see but one thing properly she might quite easily see God.

The thought so moved her that she flung herself down on the short, wind-blown grass and gazed up into the sky above her, waiting, rigid in an effort to reach singleness of mind. Nothing happened. In a few minutes she became painfully exhausted and very cold. The wind in her hair came straight off the snowfields. She began to think more kindly of her exasperating family down at the Karindehütte. She would go back to them.

She pulled herself together for the descent, aware that a frightful weariness was aching in all her bones. Glancing down toward the path, she saw that a man was standing there, staring at the mountains in a kind of lost trance, as if he had discovered the secret thing which had escaped her. It was Lewis. She blew a loving little kiss at his unconscious figure, thinking how well she was acquainted with the shape of his head at the back. She could have drawn it with her eyes shut; she had sat so often watching him while he conducted symphonies to which she did not always listen. And in this place he did not look more solitary than he always seemed in crowded concert halls.

Presently his vision seemed to break up, and he took to walking about, in a distraught frenzy, stumbling sometimes, and often almost running. She knew what ailed him and was very sorry. Living in a family of artists she had

come to regard this implacable thing which took them as a great misfortune. Oddly enough it had missed her out; alone of the tribe, she was safe from it. She did not believe that she would ever be driven to these monstrous creative efforts. She desired nothing but to be allowed to look on at the world; and the result of her observations had been that she rated the writing of music as an atrocious and painful disease. She pitied her friend when it assailed him as much as if he had fallen down and broken his leg. To her the thing was a hidden curse, a family werewolf, always ready to spring out and devour them all. It was at the bottom of most of their misfortunes. Its place in her scheme of things was approximate to the position which the devil might hold in the mind of a better instructed little girl.

"Poor Lewis!" she murmured. "I thought as much! He's been looking like a broody hen all the week."

She guessed that he must not discover her and was for stealing off down the far side of the hill when he caught sight of her. Immediately he hailed her, bounding up the slope very quickly, so that she could not get away.

"Tessa! What are you doing here? Aren't you cold?"

He spoke almost mechanically, as if he hardly knew what he said. She saw that he was shaken and unhappy at being caught off his guard. She said that she had come up to look at the moon, and he smiled rather sourly.

"It's a pity to go moon gazing at your age," he told her. "But I suppose it's a symptom."

"What of?"

"The green sickness."

"What's that? It sounds very disagreeable."

He looked as if he meant it to be disagreeable. He insisted upon explaining himself with a bitterness which said to her, as plainly as possible, that she

was not to suppose he was come to these moonlit mountains, because he found them at all beautiful, or that he had any regard for the feelings of any one else who might happen to think so. She felt that he deserved to be teased a little, and when he had done she said:

"What a ray of sunshine you are! It was the green sickness, I suppose, brought you up here. I thought at first you'd come to look for that sixpence we lost two years ago. I saw you running round in rings."

"How long have you been up here?" he asked suspiciously.

"Longer than you. You disturbed me."

"Why didn't you say so?"

"I didn't want to be disturbed. I was busy thinking. I was just going off quietly to a less crowded part of this mountain when you must needs interrupt me."

She was edging away from him. He saw suddenly that she was really afraid of him. Something that he had said must have hurt her. He laughed and asked what she was thinking of, whereat she took to her heels, ignoring his shout that she should stop. Wildly she fled down the hill, terrified, hearing him gain upon her, and seized by the primitive panic of the hunted. When, quite soon, he caught her, she screamed loudly.

"Why can't you stop when I call?" he panted. "Now tell me— My God, Tessa! What's the matter?"

"Go away!"

"Have you got a handkerchief?" he asked presently. "Because I lent mine to Tony, who also needed it to-night."

At the mention of Tony her tears ceased abruptly. She turned away from him with a slight wounded gesture, and was silent.

"This seems to be a habit in your family," he gibed. "If you've got a handkerchief, perhaps I'd better retire."

But he did not offer to go. He stood

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still, watching her intently, full of a sort of compunction. She was nearer than he liked to the rocky edge of the path, which dropped away to a sea of clouds below. He had an apprehension that she might spring over if he moved or touched her. He waited, and was startled to hear her speaking in a low voice, almost to herself:

"Tony's been crying all the evening."

"Oh, Tony!" he exclaimed impatiently.

And he took a short turn along the path, away from her, as if he was afraid that she would force upon him some piece of information about Tony. He did not want to hear anything about Tony. She was a white flower, cast into the pit. He had been very fond of her when she was a little, wild thing, like Tessa, a delicate, audacious creature, trapped now in the inevitable mill. No man endowed with heart and imagination could care to contemplate such a spectacle.

Lewis had both these commodities in a distressing degree. He spent his life in running away from them, and his cruelty was a kind of instinctive defense which he had set up against them. His refuge had been a somber arrogance which denied to the rest of the world capacities for suffering equal to his own. He hurt his friends by way of demonstrating for his own satisfaction their comfortable insensibility. He really wished to convince himself that the majority of mankind is too stupid to apprehend anything keener than physical pain, and he nourished this illusion by a perverse frequenting of the company of people who were, for the most part, more brutal than himself.

Even so, he was not altogether safe. On the occasions when, despite his resistance, some sorrow of the outer world pierced the armor of his egotism, he was, out of all proportion, disturbed, simply because he would not admit that

tears are the common lot. He fled from his own compassion.

He had done his best, of late, to avoid Antonia, and, if it had been possible, he would have avoided Teresa while she was thus shaken with the reverberations of her sister's evil fortune. Only that he could never fly from Teresa. She was a darling, simply, and must always be comforted, even though his own ineptitude had done the damage. She was the sweet exception to all the young, fierce generalizations with which he dismissed the world. He came back to her and took her arm and began to walk her up the hill again, consoling and protesting rather incoherently:

"Don't worry about Tony, my dear love. She'll be all right. She'll settle down. She's—she's just growing up. That's not comfortable. But it happens to everybody. God help them!"

Teresa seemed hardly to listen, but his last sentence caught her attention and she asked curiously:

"Do you believe in God then?"

He thought about it and said that he did.

"Though I'm blest if I know what I mean when I say it. What do you believe, Tessa?"

She hesitated and then told him how, a few minutes since, she had felt herself to be on the brink of a discovery.

"I didn't see anything," she said sadly. "That's because I'm so very ignorant. When I say God, I don't know what I mean. If I was Roberto, I'd be better off, for I would know. I'd mean that God up there."

And she nodded toward the Calvary, standing out clear against the sky above them, guarding even in this lonely place the secret of man's eternal pain.

"You don't mean Him?" she asked Lewis rather doubtfully.

Lewis replied, almost furiously, that he did not. He hurried her past the place and they wandered away, round

the corner of the hill, to a sort of platform where they could look across at the Karwendal ranges, distant, icy, inhuman. Here, if anywhere, dwelt the divinity which they both worshipped. They sat down together on the grass and fell to talking in hushed tones as if afraid of disturbing the silent immensity of the night. He told her a number of things, he hardly knew what; small, absurd things which he had seen and done in his wandering life. They caught her attention and soothed her distress. Soon she was laughing, and when at last they set off for home she was skipping along beside him with the lightheartedness which usually belonged to her.

He had always thought her the pick of the bunch. She was an admirable, graceless little baggage, entirely to his taste. She amused him, invariably. And, queerly enough, she was innocent. That was an odd thing to say of one of Sanger's daughters, but it was the truth. Innocence was the only name he could find for the wild, imaginative solitude of her spirit. The impudence of her manners could not completely hide it, and beyond it he could discern an intensity of mind which struck him as little short of a disaster in a creature so fragile and tender, so handicapped by her sex. She would give herself to pain with a passionate readiness, seeing only its beauty, with that singleness of vision which is the glory and the curse of such natures. He wondered anxiously, and for the first time, what was to become of her.

He knew.

He had always known, and until tonight he had taken it for granted. She was barely two years younger than that sister whose history she would inevitably repeat. Paulina, too, was fashioned for the same fate. Unbalanced, untaught, fatally warm-hearted, endowed with none of the stolid prudence which had protected the more fortunate

Kate, they were both likely to set about the grimy business of life in much the same way. He knew what company they kept.

And to-night he discovered that he could not accept this. He had always supposed, vaguely, that Teresa would spare his feelings by growing up quite suddenly of her own accord; leaping into an experienced maturity which should demand no compassion. Now he grasped disturbing possibilities. While she was still so childish, so liable to be hurt, she ought to be safeguarded. She must be—she must be shut up. There were too many Birnbaums about. He scowled so dreadfully and marched her down the hill at such a pace that she wanted to ask him what was the matter now. She could not know that he was humming that song which Caryl had written for Kate, since he had heartily abused it. Yet the tune of it was on his lips:

Ich schau dich an und Wehmuth
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.

He need not have distressed himself so violently on her account. She was guarded by the constant simplicity of her young heart. He was himself the only man who could ever betray it, and she had been his, had he known it, as long as she could remember. Her love was as natural and necessary to her as the breath she drew, which is, perhaps, the reason why he divined nothing of it. And if he had known, he would not, probably, have thought her fortunate. He would have wished her a better fancy. As it was, he thought that, if she were his little girl, he would put her into a convent. He knew little of convents, but he imagined that they were safer for girls than Sanger's circus. Lina, by way of precaution, ought to be in one, too. It would be dull, perhaps, but there were, on the whole, worse things than dullness. He wondered whether he could, as an intimate

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friend, persuade Sanger to take some steps about it.

They parted at the house door and he climbed up to his room in the annex. Teresa danced away to the girls' bedroom and remembered on the threshold that Antonia might still be crying there. She put her head round the door and saw that the room was empty. It was a large barn of a place with very little furniture. There was one bed for Kate and Tony and another for Tessa and Lina. Kate's clothes were packed away in a painted chest under the window, but the entire wardrobe of the other young ladies lay about permanently in heaps on the floor amid books, music, guitars, cigarette ends, cherry stones, and dust. Entering hastily, Teresa began to pull off her clothes and fling them down about the room as she promenaded in the moonlight, humming gayly her little duet with Lewis in "Breakfast with the Borgias." An old pair of Kate's stays lay across a chair and she tried them on, observing with dismal accuracy how far too ample was their fit.

"Yet Kate's not fat," she reflected; "it's I who am such a scarecrow. I wish I was Caterina."

This was a sister of Roberto who had helped with the house work in Genoa and who, at fifteen, possessed a figure which was the secret envy of Teresa and Paulina. In their eyes a southern richness of outline was the height of beauty and they deeply deplored their own angular contours. Teresa was still sitting in her brief chemise wondering sadly how to grow fat when Paulina sauntered into the room, and, after glancing twice behind her in a nervous way, began in a scared whisper:

"I say—Tessa——"

"Yes?"

Paulina shuffled her feet, unable to proceed.

"Yes! What is it?"

"Oh, Tessa!" cried Paulina with a little gasp.

"*Espèce d'imbécile!* What's the matter?"

Paulina came quite close and clutched her arm.

"I'm frightened," she said in a very low voice.

"What? Lina, what is it?"

"Will you come, please?"

"Come! Where?"

"Tony and I are frightened—at a very funny thing."

"A funny thing! Where?"

"In—in Sanger's room."

"Were you in there?"

"No. We heard it. Outside the door."

The sacredness of Sanger's room was an unbroken law. No child ever ventured there without express permission.

"What did you hear?"

"A funny noise. Do come, Tessa!"

Teresa got up and made for her father's room.

"Is Caryl there, Lina?"

"No," panted Paulina, still clutching her arm. "He's gone down to the valley to help Kate carry up the milk."

They climbed the stairs to the top landing, where they found Antonia and Sebastian listening intently outside Sanger's closed door.

"It's nothing; he's just snoring," asserted Antonia.

"Listen, Tessa!" commanded the boy.

She listened and wondered that the whole house did not tremble.

"He's not snoring," she said. "He's sort of groaning. We ought to go in. He must be ill."

"Oh, we can't," objected Antonia. "Think what a to-do there was the last time we did."

They stood waiting outside a room which was now dreadfully silent.

"It's stopped," breathed Paulina.

They clung together, straining for

the least sound, and all started violently when a padding footstep crossed the room.

"That's Gelert," said Sebastian reassuringly. "I heard him whining a minute ago."

The dog whimpered faintly and gave two short yelping barks, ending in a long howl. Paulina whispered that it was funny that Sanger did not swear at him. But no voice came, only a furious scratching at the door and another appalling howl.

"I'm going in," Teresa stated. "Something funny must have happened. Somebody ought to go. I don't care if there is a row. Will you come, Tony?"

But Antonia drew back, crying that she was afraid. Teresa opened the door and was nearly flung down by Gelert, who bounded past them and fled howling along the passage. Sebastian pushed in front of her and advanced into the room, remarking:

"I'll come with you. I expect you'd like a man."

The lamp showed the floor all covered with sheets of music, and an overturned ink pot and their father sprawling across the table at which he sat, his face hidden.

"He's fainted," suggested Teresa. "We ought to give him brandy."

Sebastian tugged at the heavy body, trying to turn it over, his white face flushing with the strain. They both pulled and the chair with Sanger in it toppled over and went thudding to the floor. She bounded toward the table for a brandy flask, but her brother, looking at the face which gaped up at them, said:

"It's no use. He's dead."

"Oh, no! No!"

She knelt beside her father, pouring brandy into his mouth and over his face and over the music on the floor until Sebastian took the flask from her and led her from the room, repeating:

"It's no use, Tessa. He's dead. We must get people. I'll go and look for Ike. You fetch Lewis."

"Oh, Lewis—I must get Lewis!"

She whispered his name to herself as she crossed the moonlit space between the house and the annex. She had to walk rather slowly because of the ache of terror which seemed to numb all her limbs. The stairs to his door seemed difficult to climb. She stood, fingering the latch, telling him what had happened. And Lewis, who had been lying half dressed on his bed, jumped up and began to put on his boots. His coat he wrapped round Teresa, for she was shivering, and he took her back into the house. Her father's room was full of people. Roberto and Birnbaum were there, bending over Sanger's body, and Sebastian was trying to mop up the ink on the floor. They were all dazed and silent until Linda, in a pink-silk wrapper with all her yellow hair blazing on her shoulders, burst into the room. Trigorin followed her. When she saw what had happened she turned a queer, chalky white and burst into noisy, unrestrained weeping. Her loud cries rang through the stricken house so that Caryl and Kate, coming up from the valley, heard, and knew that calamity had overtaken them all.

CHAPTER VI.

The news of Sanger's death was received with concern everywhere but in England. Even there, however, the fact of it was reported in the newspapers. "Our Austrian correspondent" wrote a little paragraph to say that Albert Sanger, by birth an Englishman and well known in Germany and elsewhere as a conductor and composer, had died at his residence in the Karwendal mountains. His best-known works were "Akbar," "Prester John," "Barbarossa," "Susanna," "The Mountains," et cetera. It was thus that the

news of the calamity reached the Churchill family.

The unfortunate Evelyn had possessed two brothers, both distinguished scholars and both a good deal older than herself. Of these Robert, the least brilliant and the most commercial of the family, had become the principal of a flourishing university in the Midlands. Charles had never got further than being the Master of St. Merryn's, Cambridge, a position which half of his friends did not consider nearly good enough for him. The other half held that it had become important simply by reason of his holding it. He had a finger in a good many pies. He was acknowledged to be a great man by most of his generation: he looked so like one that he would probably have been able to impose himself on the world even if he had not possessed so many and such solid attainments. His gifted brother Robert could never succeed in looking like anything but an unsuccessful house master in a second-rate public school—a gray, harassed, precise gentleman, an invincible pedagogue, but without any of the more endearing traits of erudition, its antique polish, or its unworldliness. He was always neatly dressed by the best of wives. Charles was the butt of a hundred caricaturists; his large, unwieldy body, his little legs, his small eyes twinkling behind enormous glasses, and the gray, bushy hair which fringed his bald crown, were known all over the academic world. The contrast presented by his somewhat gross person and the fine delicacy of his wits formed the theme of endless anecdote. Being a widower, he wore his clothes until they fell off him, for no better reason than that he liked them, had got used to them, and objected to change. His beautiful daughter, who kept house for him, indulged him in this and in every other whim. Early in her teens she had especially studied the business of

being "the Master's daughter" and she did it very prettily, calling him "Sir" after the manner of a junior member of the college.

It was Charles who first discovered the paragraph about Albert Sanger. He came upon it at breakfast and read it through twice over with close attention. Then he took a large bite of hot, buttered toast and glanced across the table at his daughter, announcing:

"Albert Sanger is dead, my dear Florence."

"Albert Sanger?" said Florence, looking up absently.

She knew perfectly well who Albert Sanger was, but she was reading an article in her part of the paper on Poor Law Reform and she did not like to be interrupted.

"Your poor Aunt Evelyn's husband. My brother-in-law. Your uncle."

"Oh, yes," said she, with her eyes wandering back to the paper in her hand. "What about him, did you say?"

"He's dead."

"Oh! More coffee, sir?"

"Not yet, thank you. I'd no idea he'd written so much. Just listen to this!"

And he read the notice aloud to Florence.

"Susanna!" she said with some disfavor. "I heard it once, in Dresden. I didn't like it."

"No, my love. I dare say not. I never heard that Sanger ever wrote anything in the least like 'The Magic Flute.'"

Florence ignored this gibe, which was quite unjust, and proceeded to give reasons for her opinion of "Susanna." She invariably supported all her opinions with excellent reasons.

"I don't like subjects chosen from the Bible."

"The Apocrypha, Florence."

"Is it? Well, but it's the same *genre*. These semisacred operas are nearly always treated with levity and bad taste;

I don't know why. They've no dignity."

"Not a very dignified theme," mused Charles.

"And it's dreary music. Ugly, you know, and noisy."

"Dear! Dear! Times change! Your aunt didn't find it ugly. She thought the world and all of him, poor girl!"

"That was a very odd affair," she commented thoughtfully.

She remembered her aunt very well. Nobody who had known the brilliant creature before her sudden and complete disappearance could possibly forget her. She played so beautifully. And she had a dashing, daring way with her and left vivid impressions of laughter and excitement and people crowding round to hear what she said. Her low voice and enchanting, husky laugh always seemed to inspire other people to make a noise; the dullest gathering, when she joined it, would gayly begin to sound like a party.

Florence was sometimes told that she resembled her aunt, but she could not feel it herself. She enjoyed a conspicuous popularity of her own, being clever, good-humored, an excellent dancer, and competent at games. And in appearance she was, perhaps, not unlike; she had the same clear, glowing brown skin, aquiline features, fine eyes, and neat, dark little head. She had the same choiceness of dress. But she lacked that overwhelming power to charm which Evelyn had possessed independently, as it were, from all her other qualities. Her simple, tranquil gayety of manner, though pleasing, could never enslave a crowd. She was at her best in a small circle, while no stage had been too large for Evelyn in her prime.

Yet all that beauty and fascination had been squandered. There had been a time when Charles and Robert had hurried off to Germany, a discomposed interlude, full of telegrams and discreet family conclaves behind closed

doors. Florence, a schoolgirl, could only guess at what had happened. She did not learn the full history until some years later, when she was considered old enough to hear it.

"Poor Evelyn! Poor girl!" muttered Charles into his coffee cup. "That fellow was a brute."

"I expect," said Florence aggressively, "that she got a little bored with polite society. The world's a big place."

"So it is! So it is!" agreed Charles with a chuckle. "And plenty of fine things in it. She needn't have selected a dustman with a turn for music."

He found it uncommonly difficult to keep a straight face when his daughter instructed him as to the size of the world. It was a point which had but recently attracted her attention, and, in his opinion, she had taken her time about coming to it.

"He had more than a turn for music," she said rather grudgingly. "What was the matter with him? What sort of class?"

"Upon my word I don't know. He was no class, as my old bedmaker used to say. No class at all. A perfectly uncultivated savage, that's what he was."

"A child of Nature?" queried Florence, who was really very curious about Sanger.

"Why, yes! That's more like it. 'Red in tooth and claw.'"

"I think I like children of Nature."

"You never met any. I, for my sins, have met Sanger. I prefer a child of grace every time."

"But I dare say he was encouraging after a surfeit of clever young men. I'm getting very tired of clever young men myself."

"You cannot possibly be more tired of them than I am," replied the master. "But when you are my age you'll know that stupid young men are very much worse because there are more of them."

Florence was nearly twenty-eight. She referred to the fact continually, for she had begun lately to take her age as a serious matter. She had quite suddenly grown out of a lot of things which had till then contented her.

"It doesn't say if he's left a widow," said Charles, returning to Sanger. "But he's bound to. Some sort of a widow. And children! He had children of all kinds, as you might say. Some of them are your cousins. I hope they are all right! Remind me to write to your Uncle Robert about them. We ought to make inquiries, I think."

He got up, folded the paper, and brushed the crumbs off his waistcoat. At the door he turned to say:

"Oh—and the bishop will be here to lunch. And I'm dining in Hall."

Florence, having finished her breakfast, went about her household duties with the methodical but unenthusiastic efficiency of a woman who is too intelligent to neglect such things. Then she put on her hat and went out to practice string quartettes with some friends.

As she sauntered along Chesterton Lane, lugging her unwieldy 'cello and nodding to acquaintances, she thought curiously about her aunt, and wondered if it was just mere boredom which had prompted her to fling her bonnet so effectually over the mill. She had abandoned this delightful existence for another, unimaginably remote. Was it possible to presume that she had grown tired of the refinements, the endless demands of civilization? Or had there been a force more potent than mere discontent? There had been, of course, the musical dustman. They had gone to Venice, which sounded the right sort of place, but it was difficult to guess how they had occupied themselves. They did not discuss architecture or pictures because Sanger was an uncultivated savage and could not, presumably, discuss anything. Florence actually paused in her walk, trying to figure

out what one would do in Venice with a savage. Even supposing an ungovernable passion had brought them there, it seemed that they must have been without occupation for many hours, compelled to row about silently in gondolas.

And then it was impossible to guess whether Evelyn had ultimately repented of her bargain. The family assumed that she did, but, all things considered, their grounds were slender. It looked as though they found it more decent to suppose that she regretted her conduct. They had never been able to forget that the wedding had taken place after the Venetian expedition. But Florence, who was nothing if not broadminded, took little exception to that. The only really inexcusable thing that her aunt had done was to call Sanger a great musician.

Still, there must have been more in him than was apparent to Robert and Charles since Evelyn had chosen to remain with him. A lady of such spirit would not have done that unless she had continued to be satisfied with him. So thought Florence, who had never herself gone anywhere without a full assurance that she would be able to get back.

A week later she found her father tearing his hair over a bundle of letters.

"Florence," he said, "you never reminded me to write to your Uncle Robert about those children."

"What children, sir?"

"Your poor Aunt Evelyn's children."

"Oh, yes! I'm so sorry. I forgot all about them."

"Well, I'll have to write now, for it's obvious that something must be done. I've a letter here from one of Sanger's other children. A nice fellow he seems to be—too nice to be a son of Sanger's, I should have thought. The old rascal left nothing but debts, and our children—there seem to be four of them, all

under sixteen—are left to starve, unless something is done for them."

And he handed her a letter from Caryl, an excellent letter, deferential but independent. He had thought it right, he said, to discover the views of the Churchill family before making arrangements for his young half-brother and sisters. It appeared that he and Kate had got employment and were willing to contribute toward the support of the others if no other help was forthcoming. They would all be staying on in the Tyrol for another month, should Charles be disposed to communicate with them.

"Poor little dears!" exclaimed Florence. "How old is he, do you think, and sister Kate?"

"I should imagine that they are all short of twenty. But just read this; it's amazing!"

He handed her a letter from Jacob Birnbaum, who began:

As a very old friend of Albert Sanger I take the liberty of writing to you. He has left four children who are, I think, related to you. Sir, you may not be aware that his death has left them penniless. The eldest is now sixteen. They are not able to support themselves without help. A brother and sister they have who are able to work, and they have said that what is possible they will do. But these, too, are very young, and I hope you will agree with me, sir, when I say that it is too much for such young people to support the whole family. I do not think it possible. I do not know if you are able to help these children, but it is right that you should know how they are left. Before arrangements shall be made, your wishes should be asked. I have wished to pay for the little boy, for five years at a school. Also I will pay something if you should think of placing the young ladies in an establishment. I would like to do this; I have loved their father.

"Well! That's generous!" commented Florence.

"Humph! I'll believe in his money when I see it," grumbled Charles. "I distrust the common sense of anybody who could be fond of Sanger. I shouldn't worry to read the next letter,

if I were you. It's very long. It's from another friend of the family who writes the most surprising English. Very flowery! He condoles with me, in two pages, upon the loss of a unique brother-in-law, spends three more in explaining what a blow it is to the whole world, and ends up with his own bereavement and the privileges of knowing Sanger. At the end, just before sending me his distinguished sentiments, he mentions that he will subscribe five hundred pounds if anything is to be done for the children. He's crazy!"

"Where do they all write from?" asked Florence, looking at the postmarks. "All posted from Weissau! Is it a sort of settlement, do you think?"

"Heaven knows! One of us will have to go and find out. They seem to be uncommonly free with their money. Personally, I favor the gentleman who wrote the postcard. He's the only one who professes no regard for Sanger."

Florence looked at the postcard, which said:

Are you thinking of taking the girls away? Somebody should. If money is short, I could let you have £50. That is all I've got, but I dare say I could send you some more sometime. Yours, etc., Lewis Dodd.

"Dodd!" she cried, in great excitement. "Lewis Dodd! Why! That must be the man who wrote the 'Symphony in Three Keys!' You know, father! I'm sure you've heard me speak of it. I heard it last time I was in Germany. It's so unfair of you to accuse me in that wholesale way of not caring for modern music. Nothing could be more modern than that symphony, and I felt quite transported when I heard it. Fancy his being a friend of Sanger's! His music is immeasurably better. The second movement is quite beyond praise. It opens with a twenty-bar theme for strings which——"

"I know, my dear, I know. He seems to have got fifty pounds out of it, anyhow."

"And he wrote this postcard!" she said, looking at it respectfully.

"Rather uneducated handwriting," was Charles' comment.

Florence turned it over. On the back of it was a picture of a bright blue lake surrounded by very black pines and pink mountains. A small, blotchy steamer was crossing the lake in the middle of the card. Along the azure sky Mr. Dodd had written a postscript, an afterthought:

It would be a good thing of they were put into a convent.

Charles was saying:

"But who can go? Somebody must. Somebody ought to be on the spot to settle things. And, as you know, I can't get away with this commission coming next week."

"Of course you can't. But I can. I'll go at once and bring all the poor little dears back with me."

"Well, my dear, I'm not sure if I ought to let——"

"I assure you I can manage it perfectly. I'm not a child. I'm twenty-eight."

"I doubt if any woman could tackle it alone. We must see if your Uncle Robert can't go."

"Uncle Robert?" Florence looked very doubtful. "Do you think he would be any use at all?"

Charles began to laugh.

"Robert!" he shouted. "Ho! Ho! Poor Robert!"

Florence also laughed. It was their custom to be amused at Robert, who was supposed, in Cambridge, to be incapable of making or seeing a joke.

"No, it's not Robert's job," conceded Charles with a subsiding chuckle. "He was pretty well at sea, I remember, when we went out to look after your poor aunt. But this I will say for him:

he has a good head on his shoulders where money is concerned. He'll deal with these philanthropic friends and their checks."

"But really I think a woman ought to go. He won't know a bit what to do with all these little girls. They are probably very startling children. There may be all sorts of things to be settled on the spur of the moment."

"Well, then, he can take your Aunt May with him, and she can deal with any widows there may be around."

"Widows?"

"As I said, there is bound to be at least one. More probably there are half a dozen, if I know Sanger. But we'll hope they will have taken themselves off before Robert and May arrive."

"Oh, I should like to go!" cried Florence with sparkling eyes. "I should love to see Uncle Robert confronted with the widows. And I'm sure Aunt May won't go, for Hilda and Betty have the measles. If she can't, I think I really must."

"I don't like it, my love; I don't like it. You'll have plenty to do later, when we get the children over here. I think Robert had better go by himself to fetch them."

"But I should enjoy going. I've always wanted to see the Tyrol in the spring. And I'm so much intrigued by all these queer friends and—and their postcards."

"It's these queer friends and their postcards that I don't want you to see. I know what Sanger's queer friends are probably like. You may depend upon it, they aren't fit for a decent young woman to associate with."

"My dear father! Do you really think I can't take care of myself? After all, I've been about a good deal, and I've met some pretty odd people. I don't suppose I shall be nearly as shocked at the widows as Uncle Robert will be."

"I dare say not. I'd rather you were

more shocked. But you've lived a very protected life——"

"Father!"

This was an unendurable accusation and she looked very much hurt.

"But you have, my dear! And I can't help remembering how my poor Evelyn—I was very fond of your aunt, you know, Florence—she was younger than you, of course, but——"

"That was quite different. I don't see what can possibly happen to me if Uncle Robert goes, too."

"Well, well! We'll see. But you must really be careful in your dealings with any boon companions of Sanger's you may meet. They are probably the sweepings of the earth. Give me that postcard."

"All we know at present," she said, taking another look at it before she gave it up, "is that they are generous."

"On paper, Florence, on paper!"

"Really, sir, I think you are being unjustly suspicious. You are prejudiced because of Aunt Evelyn. But you know, I often wonder why you take it so for granted that she was miserable. We can't know. That sort of life is attractive to some people. There is something rather fine, when you come to think of it, about an uncompromising demand for freedom. Our life is, in a way, so cramped."

He looked at her. From infancy she had always done exactly what she pleased with a persistence which belied the sweet placability of her manner. In the face of criticism or protest she exhibited none of Evelyn's flaming defiance, only a pleasant disregard which had always vanquished him. Sometimes, viewing her unswerving pursuit of a chosen course, he was compelled to liken her to something slow, crushing, irresistible—a steam-roller. Already he knew that he would have to let her go to the Tyrol, and she talked about her life being cramped!

"I think, my angel," he said, rather

testily, "that you scarcely know what you are talking about."

CHAPTER VII.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning and Kate was busy chopping suet in the kitchen when Lewis poked his head round the door. He asked if there was any breakfast left in a tone which suggested that he did not suppose so. He knew that she would not let him starve, but he wanted, if possible, to feel aggrieved.

"Of course there is," said kind Kate. "Come and sit by the fire while I make you an omelette. I hope this means you've had a better night."

"No," he said gloomily. "I slept a couple of hours late this morning, and that was all. I was dropping off just when it was getting light, and then those bloody cow bells roused me."

"Oh, yes! They are driven up to pasture every morning at sunrise. We get used to it. Poor Lewis!"

"I've tried going to bed drunk, and I've tried sober. I can't sleep either way."

"It's shock," said Kate placidly, as she broke eggs into a pan. "Your nerves got upset when Sanger died. It's the same thing that makes Tessa and Sebastian sick. They've been sick, off and on, you know, ever since that awful night."

"I do know," he said with distaste. "It's impossible for any one in this house not to know how sick Tessa and Sebastian have been, off and on."

She dished up her omelette and gave it to him. Then she said, as she brewed some coffee:

"It's been very upsetting for all of us. Now I do hope you'll take a day off. You can't work while you are in this state. If you try, you'll only have another sleepless night."

"I can't stop in the middle of a thing."

"You'll do no good at it."

"Mind your own business, Kate."

She excused his incivility on account of his interrupted work and bad night. He was plainly exasperated. Sanger's death had thrown him off his balance, a thing which happened easily at any time. There was nothing to be done for a man in this state. Her father had always been like this, possessed by a furious despair, when any unlucky accident pulled him up short in the evolution of a new idea; and her father had been serenity itself beside Lewis. She went on with her work, while he devoured his omelette, a savage, baffled expression on his white face.

Presently she said:

"I wish I could mind my own business. Here's Schenck wants me to join the company at once. I don't suppose he'll keep the place open for me. But how can I go until something's been settled about the children. Oh, what is to be done about them? Some sensible person must take charge of them. No, Susan! I can't have you bothering in my kitchen. Run along back to your mother."

"Mammy said I was to come down here for a bit," whined Susan. "She's got Uncle Kiki talking to her."

"Has she? Well, you can go and tell her that I won't have you here, and the sooner she takes herself off, and you, and him, the better pleased we shall be. She's no business here."

Such an explosion was unusual in Kate, but she was indignant at Linda and Trigorin and their prolonged sojourn in the house. Linda was in no hurry to depart, as long as somebody else could be prevailed upon to feed her. She meant to remain until she was turned out, and she kept Trigorin, now hopelessly subjugated, at her side, in case of need. They were resented by the whole family, but Caryl, now the master of the house, was too much harassed and preoccupied to meddle with them, and was, moreover, a little

embarrassed by Trigorin's generous offers of money for the children. Kate said to Lewis:

"It's a bit too much the way he's always with her!"

"It keeps him out of the way," argued Lewis. "And that's something. For my part, she can have the flea trainer as a gift, if she wants him."

"If only—— Oh, Caryl! Is that you? Just come in here for a moment! Here's Schenck written to say he wants me at once. What am I to do? How can I leave the girls?"

"Oh, that's all right," said Caryl cheerfully, waving a letter in his hand. "That's quite all right. You can go as soon as you like. There's a lady coming."

"A lady!"

"Yes, and a man, too. The children's uncle."

"I know," said Lewis. "The Master. The man we all wrote to."

"Did you write?" asked Caryl in some surprise. "No. It's not him, but his brother. He writes this, though. It's most liberal. He will take the children, Kate. He says we aren't to worry."

"But the lady," said Lewis, "is the wife of—which?"

"Neither. She's one of their daughters. By what I can make out they are coming quite soon."

"But is she married?"

"How should I know? He doesn't say."

"Because," said Lewis dubiously, "if she's only some one's daughter she may be quite a young lady. I wonder if she'll do."

"He seems to think so," said Caryl, glancing at the letter. "He says she'll advise about the girls' education. He says he recommends a good English school, but we must discuss it."

"A good English school!" exclaimed Lewis. "That would be better even than a convent, I expect."

"But you say they are coming soon?"

began Kate. "They are never coming here? Not here! We've no room, for one thing."

"The man can have father's room. And if you are gone, the lady can have your place in the girls' room," said Caryl.

"Oh, no!" Kate, thinking of the dirt and confusion in the girls' room, was positive that she could not put the lady there. "And Tony has taken to having nightmares; she screams and kicks anybody in the bed. They really can't come here, Caryl."

"Put the lady in Sanger's room," suggested Lewis, "and let the uncle share with Ike, and Linda——"

"Linda must go," said Caryl. "She must go at once before this lady comes. And then Trigorin will go, too, and we shall have lots of room."

"I wonder how much it will cost you to get Linda out of the house," speculated Lewis. "A good deal, if she guesses you have reasons for wanting her gone in a hurry. She——"

"Look out!" whispered Kate. "That child——"

But Susan had already slipped off to report the news to her mother. Lewis consoled them by saying that, even if Linda did demand a bribe, they could always borrow it off Trigorin.

"It's certainly a difficulty, their coming so soon," said Caryl. "But I shall be glad to see them. I'll hand the children over and get off. And Kate can go as soon as she has packed her things."

Kate went next day. To the last she was very much distressed to think of the discomforts which the lady would have to bear. She left a thousand instructions with Roberto, who gathered that Miss Churchill would want cups of tea and large cans of hot water every two or three hours. Caryl, who was much grieved at parting with his sister, decided to accompany her as far as Munich, where he would spend the night and return next morning. Lewis and

the children came down to Weissau to see them off and the parting upon the landing stage was very affecting. Kate broke down suddenly and began to sob with the strangled, speechless grief of a placid person tried beyond endurance. She stood, neat and stalwart, hiding a very red face in a clean pocket handkerchief, and grasping in her free hand a dress basket and umbrella, until the boat came up and Caryl gently propelled her on board. He took her down to the little cabin, where she might recover herself, and neither was there to wave when the boat made off again across the still lake waters.

The children, contrary to their custom, did not cry at all. Kate's tears, the premonition that this tender and loving sister had abandoned them, shocked them too deeply. They watched the departing boat in silence, looking so small, pale, and forlorn that Lewis, who was in a particularly vile temper, began to swear at them. This revived them wonderfully. They went and bought bulls'-eyes at the village shop and then demanded that he should take them for a row on the lake, which he did in an old boat almost as big as the ark. They paddled about in the sun, tried to race the steamboat on its return journey, passed the time of day with all the other pleasure parties, and finally took a bath in full view of the chief hotel and the high road leading along the lake. To Florence, who was sitting on a bench by the waterside, they afforded much amusement, for they artlessly bathed in their skins and got dry in the sun.

"And one of them is quite a big girl, too," she thought, as Antonia climbed into the boat. "But it seems to be the thing here. And they look very charming, I'm sure."

She had just driven up from Erfurt with her uncle because the little train was so full that they could not get into it. Weissau was full of merry-makers as it happened to be a holiday. Along

the lake road came a continual stream of people, all enjoying the lovely air. There were parties of sunburned young men with knapsacks and ice axes, and stout Germans in blue linen coats, and peasant girls in bright aprons and boys with flowers in their hats. Florence, who hated bank-holiday crowds in England, loved this one; she could even tolerate the Innsbruck shop people drinking beer under the trees in the hotel garden, because they looked so new, and were all so happy, and the day was so fine.

Though rather tired with her journey, and glad to sit still, she was completely happy. Robert Churchill had gone into the hotel to order lunch and inquire the way to the Karindethal, and she was pleased to be rid of him. He did not share her enthusiasm for this beautiful place. All the way from England he had grumbled at an enforced uprooting in the middle of term, and more than once he had tactlessly expressed a wish that his wife had been able to come with him. The crowds were, to him, a final source of irritation. The drive from Erfurt, through endless, mounting pine woods, had seemed most vexatiously slow and expensive. Now he only wanted to get on to their journey's end, transact their tiresome business, and have done with it.

Florence, on the other hand, was continually blessing the chance which had brought them. Her joy had begun early in the morning when she woke up and looked out of her window and saw, through the chestnuts of the garden, the flowery meadows of the Innthal, flanked by far, blue mountains. They woke in her an expectant rapture which was crowned by this vision of the lake. She could not look at it long enough. Sometimes the water was so still and translucent that the boats, hovering over their reflections, seemed to float on green air; and then an unexplained wind would brush it all silver, blotting

out the lovely pictures of mountain top and sky which had rested for a moment on its clear, profound surface.

She hoped that the Sanger affairs might turn out to be unexpectedly complicated so that she might have to stay for a long time.

Presently she recognized, in a party approaching her, the delightful bathers in the old boat. They were walking up to the hotel, but there was no mistaking them. In their clothes or out, they attracted attention. Though dressed like peasants, they looked wilder than the wildest mountain people, and they were so much thinner. The young man was as lean as a scarecrow, and the children were mere shrimps. They walked, too, with lightness and pace, unlike the heavy-booted trudge of the Tyrolese. As they passed her she heard with surprise that they were talking English. The smallest of the girls was saying:

"Sebastian thinks he's going to be sick some more."

"Poor Sebastian," thought Florence. "He stayed in the water too long. Oh! Sebastian! Four of them! It must be!"

She started to her feet and pursued them, crying:

"Oh, I beg your pardon, but are you Sangers?"

The five of them turned, gaped, but at last admitted that they were.

"I'm your cousin," she explained. "I'm on my way to see you. Didn't you get our telegram?"

They shook their heads, perfectly dumb with surprise. She was, to them, a strange type, from her neat gray traveling hat and veil to her comfortable, expensive, low-heeled shoes. The children had never spoken to anything like her in their lives, and to Lewis she was an envoy from the past, the sort of lady who had domineered over his infancy, but who was never allowed to interfere with him now. Sebastian was the first of them to recover. He gravely

bade her welcome, and explained that they had been expecting her though they had received no telegram. Then they all shook hands.

"But how many of you are my cousins?" she inquired, looking them over and liking what she saw.

"All except him," calculated Antonia with a nod at Lewis.

"And you are—Caryl?" Florence spoke a little doubtfully, for as she framed the words she thought he looked rather too old to be Caryl.

"Oh, no!" he said hastily. "I'm no relation. Just a friend."

"Oh, yes," she murmured in a tone that was a trifle chilly and yet not unfriendly.

"Mr. Dodd, Miss Churchill!" said Sebastian suddenly, recollecting the formula.

"Oh!" She sparkled and ceased to be chilly. "Is it Mr. Dodd? I think my father heard from you."

"Yes, I dare say he did," said Lewis, turning very red. "He—he hasn't come with you, has he?"

Florence suddenly remembered Robert and thanked heaven in parentheses that he had been inside the hotel when his nieces were bathing in front of it. She explained where he was, and suggested that they should all lunch together before driving up to the Karindehütte. They moved along the path, still rather shy and embarrassed. The children could not believe that they were really related to such a marvelous creature. They stared expansively. Lewis also took her in, a little more furtively, and she was put to it not to glance at him rather more than was necessary when she remembered that she was walking and talking with the composer of the "Symphony in Three Keys."

"Bitter looking," she thought, "and ugly, and so ragged! But what a charming voice! And very fond of the children, I think. Sixteen, isn't she? She

doesn't look it. One must get rid of all one's prejudices to understand them. I do believe he's shy!"

He was desperately shy. But he was making a great and unaccustomed effort to be agreeable because he was anxious that the strange lady should be pleased. On inspection he had decided that she would be a most excellent person to have charge of his friend Teresa. At first he had thought that somebody less young and charming would better fill the part, but the efficiency and ease of her manners, the elegant common sense of her dress, soon convinced him. Only it was a misfortune that she should arrive plump into the middle of them like this. He had meant to urge the girls to comb their hair before she came, and now it was hanging in a dripping tangle down their backs. And Caryl and Kate were away. And, when they got up to the house, there would be Linda. He could not think what Miss Churchill would say to Linda. She might, possibly, be so much scandalized that she would pack up her gear forthwith and return to England without the girls. So he did his best to entertain her and make a good impression, speaking very quickly and stammering slightly as was his habit when particularly bashful. He explained how Caryl and Kate had gone to Munich.

Just before they got to the hotel he caught sight of two stout gentlemen coming posting along the valley road, who looked, as they got nearer, uncommonly like Trigorin and Jacob Birnbaum. They seemed to be in a great hurry and much agitated. He detached himself from the cousins and joined them.

"A telegram came, after you had all gone," panted Jacob.

"We thought we should open it. And then we thought we should at once come down and tell you. These English cousins—they will come to-day. We thought it might be better if we could

warn you. You can tell them that they shall stay at the hotel."

"Too late," said Lewis. "They've come already. We've just met Miss. There she is."

"Ach!" said the other two, surveying the distant Florence in alarm.

"And she intends to come up to the Karindehütte after lunch. She says so."

"Can we not say that there is no room?"

"Sebastian told her that there was plenty of room. His neck ought to be wrung."

"Ach!"

"What about Linda?" asked Lewis anxiously. "Does she know? What has she done?"

"She has a headache; she has gone to bed," Jacob told him.

"I think she will stay there. One cannot be so barbarous as to pull her out, unless the English uncle will attempt it."

"Then let her stay," advised Lewis. "They won't know she's there. Tomorrow, when Caryl comes, somebody can take the lady for a walk to look at the scenery, and we will eject Linda."

Uncle Robert had come out of the hotel and was being introduced to the children. Trigorin, who had been taking stock of the group, now broke in, exclaiming:

"But—but that young lady is clearly of the *beau monde*! *Femme parfaite-mment comme il faut*! It is unmistakable. How is it possible that she should stay at the Karindehütte?"

The other young men shook their heads. It scarcely seemed possible that she should. The prospect filled them all with a sort of panic.

TO BE CONTINUED.



IF YOU BUT LOVED ME

IF you but loved me, what a night were this!

Never on earth so white a moon has shone
Since Haco's bride, that pale Semiramis,

By the loud-sounding sea was wooed and won.
Never such roses, since those flowers grown

By a desirous king in shadowed, green,

High-hanging groves of ancient Babylon

To ease the heartache of his Median queen.

If you but loved me, I should wear to-night

The glamorous mantle of dead Heloise;

Sweeter than Abelard's your step, more light

Under the moon, under the bending trees,

If you but loved me—ah! that little word,

Cold as a wall, sharp as a flaming sword!

Dorothy Stockbridge.

by Larry Evans

Author of

*The Painted
Lady*



CASSIDY

ONLY one room in the house showed a light—the room on the first-floor corner which faced both streets. That was the reason Cassidy had chosen it from the long double row of stone-and-stucco residences which flanked it on both sides as the one best suited to his purpose; and Cassidy's very reasoning was more than enough to brand him an amateur, for, had he been wise with the cunning which comes only with long practice at the craft, he would have understood that it is in the houses which flare brightest before twelve that the inmates sleep soundest just before dawn.

Cassidy didn't realize this, for Cassidy was an amateur.

One other reason had led him to mark this particular house for his prey. It was because it made reconnoitering an easy matter, especially to an inexperienced beginner, standing, as it did, upon two streets, with its unfenced lawns running out to both curbs.

Twice Cassidy passed the front of the house, and twice he paced its length along the other street, and then came to a standstill on the corner. Cassidy was cold. There was no warmth in the summer-weight coat which lay plastered flat against his narrow shoulders, heavy with the soggy snow that was wetter than the heaviest downpour of rain. His long, tapered, almost womanishly thin fingers, which fluttered again and again at his throat in a vain effort to draw the scant collar closer under his chin, were a purplish blue between the joints. Far earlier in the evening he had forgotten the pain in his feet. Now, as he stood and stared down at the white gleam of flesh showing through the cracks in the pulplike leather of his shoes, his dull wonder at the cessation of the pain was mixed with a vague thankfulness that one part of his body, at least, was comfortable. The only sensation in them now was one of pleasantly tingling numbness.

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And Cassidy was hungry. Looking back across the week which had just passed, he couldn't remember a single moment when his empty belly had not seemed to lie flat like a punctured balloon against his spine. But the cold bothered him more than did the hunger pangs beneath his belt. Even with the coat collar pinned tight under his chin, Cassidy shuddered spasmodically—violent, uncontrollable fits of shuddering, which seemed to take the boy by the throat, like some giant hand, and shake him from head to foot.

He coughed, too, as he stood there leaning unsteadily into the wind, a rattling, ghastly sort of gurgle. Once he spat—and it left a dark-red blot on the white spread of the snow at his feet. The boy winced at the sight of the blood and jerked back fearfully. A long time he stood with his thin shoulders bowed, even the bitter lash of the wind forgotten, looking down at that crimson splash; then he nodded his head, slowly and conclusively, as if some question which had been perplexing him had been answered now with a finality that admitted of no argument or contradiction on his part.

The cough had been with him too long to have any further terrors for him—and, after all, the blood on the snow was nothing new of its kind, either. He had seen the same thing plenty of times in others. But coming from his own lips it hit him pretty hard, just at first, for he knew well enough what he might expect to follow.

Cassidy was sick. For weeks he had realized that he was sick in body and in brain. To-night he was even sicker, with the raw, pitiless storm driving in off the north Pacific. But he was sick-est of all at heart. Cassidy was lonesome—he was heartsick—sick with a leaden, deadly homesickness for Manhattan.

For one brief instant longer he stood and faced the house on the corner.

"I gotta try it," he muttered. "Somehow I hate that kind of a dirty, sneakin' job. But I surely gotta be movin' pretty soon now." He twisted his head around for one last look at the red blot on the snow, now almost obliterated by the storm. "If I'm going to make it at all, I gotta hit the grit early—and—and I would kinda like t'get back home—before it does come."

With deliberate finality he turned and went shuffling back down the hill that ran from the parklike residential district of the city toward the brilliantly lighted streets below, his broken shoes sucking and bubbling noisily at every step. Cassidy was a total stranger in that West Coast town—only that afternoon he had drifted in on a freighter down from the north. He was a long way from home, yet no man who had ever known the type, even half intimately, would have mistaken him for anything save what he was. Thin-skinned, almost emaciated, with his narrow shoulders in the wet coat slumped forward over his hollow chest, there was something in his too-brilliant, pale-blue eyes and thin, crooked lips—most of all in his thin-nostriled, hooked nose, which gave his face an almost eagle-like look—that set him apart as different from the other human derelicts adrift that night in the storm.

Where they were hulking of shoulder and thick of neck, Cassidy was of an almost knifelike slenderness. His skin, in sharp contrast with the wind-scoured, raw red of their faces, was parchment-white except for the two hectic circles which burned high on his hollow cheeks, and compared with their heavy, bearlike strength of arm and limb, even the shuffling gait at which he traveled hinted, somehow, at the possibility of tiger-quick, deadly speed, ready at any instant for the call of action.

He was a stranger in the city, but for all that he went steadily and unflinchingly down toward the lights, swing-

ing around corners and cutting through dark alleyways with the unerring instinct that was his birthright, until he halted finally before the café door of a hotel which his eyes told him was the very place for which he was searching. Back home, he knew that the same hotel would have showed lights at the door which flared red on the snow, and the lack of them here did not leave Cassidy any less certain of the character of the place. There was just one reason why he had chosen it instead of one of the half dozen regular saloons which he had passed in as many blocks. In the latter places trade was always brisk at this hour, and men regularly took their refreshment standing at the bar, but the barrooms of such hotels as he knew this one to be were different, far quieter places—a sort of a little comfortable back-room affair with a few chairs, where one might lounge for a while. Even without the hour of waiting which he faced before he could retrace his steps up the long hill, Cassidy was tired—so tired that his head swam giddily, and millions of multicolored dots danced before his eyes.

For just one moment he hesitated in the entrance, while his numb fingers searched and made certain that the single coin which he had put there an hour before still lay safe in his moist pocket. Cassidy had no illusions left concerning his personal appearance—he realized that he was far from prepossessing to look upon—and earlier the same evening he had already suffered one hasty and exceedingly painful return to the pavement, merely because he had overlooked the precaution of having the silver quarter ready in his hand as an evidence of good faith that he came as a paying guest.

But in this instance Cassidy's caution was unnecessary, for when he finally pushed open the door and passed inside, the three men who stood in a little knot, heads close together, at the far end of

the bar, vouchsafed his coming not even so much as a single glance of interrogation. The water dripped musically from his soaked clothing and widened in little puddles on the floor at his feet while he stood unnoticed, one hand still on the knob; his water-filled shoes slobbered and flopped noisily as he crossed to the empty end of the bar, and even the ragged cough which sprang from Cassidy's lips before he could smother it behind an apologetic hand, served to draw only one swift, searching glance from the thick-shouldered, bull-necked attendant whose duty lay in keeping the house cleared of too noisy or too unprofitable patrons. For a fleeting instant he scanned Cassidy's lean, peaked face and half-drowned body over his shoulder, and then turned away again, even before the boy had begun to jingle his quarter defensively upon the bar top. The white-frocked barkeeper failed to lift an eyelid at the interruption. Both he and the bouncer leaned only a little closer to the third man who stood, one pudgy foot upon the rail, talking in a low, inflectionless monotone, beating his soft, pink palm now and again upon the bar for emphasis.

It was this third member of the trio who caught and held Cassidy's too brilliant gaze—and with the very first glance Cassidy placed him. Heavy lipped and heavy jowled, thick of waist and wrist—he knew the breed too well to be even vaguely interested. Without looking closer to be certain, he knew that a great, yellow-white diamond glistened from the hairy-backed, repulsively soft hand which was beating flabbily upon the bar, and that its counterpart gleamed from the broad, immaculate front of his shirt. He knew the breed, and with a delicacy which a very certain code demanded in such matters, he turned his back. But while he leaned against his end of the bar, whistling meditatively

through his teeth and blinking sleepily with the warmth and lights, Cassidy listened—he strained his ears to hear, not because he was particularly curious about the conversation, but merely from force of habit. Cassidy lived in a sphere in which one had to listen to live.

"The Gentleman's bringing some one in to-night," the fat man in evening clothes was droning in his thick, colorless monotone. He dug into an inside pocket and fished out a yellow telegraph blank and spread it out on the bar. "They're arriving on the midnight, from the south, and a half-hour late. He'll bring her right up. If everything looks right then, and I'm not here, you can get me on the wire."

The speaker paused a moment, only his fat hand continuing its soft pat-pat upon the bar.

"But it's got to be quiet," he went on, in the same inflectionless voice. "The rough stuff has got to stop. Morgan says so—he says it must quit. That affair last week was in type before the man was cold, and the girl—well, if the holler that she raised had ever reached Grant, and it would have only for a lucky break—and him with the attorney-generalship bee buzzing in his bonnet—" The man in evening clothes snapped his pudgy fingers and shrugged his shoulders in eloquent silence. "Maybe you could make the line—and maybe you couldn't."

"Now you tell Katie for me when she comes in this week just what I say. Morgan's passed the word—it's soft pedal from now on until election. He says cut the rough stuff—and if you don't know what he means by that, ask me—and the answer is easy."

He removed his patent-leather pump-clad foot from the rail and turned toward the front of the house. Just once as he was passing from view through the swinging doors, he paused and spoke again.

"Tell the Gentleman to play things close to the table for a while—and if it looks all right when he gets in to-night, call me—call me at once if I'm not here."

Cassidy was jingling his solitary quarter and still whistling softly under his breath when the bull-necked attendant stretched himself heavily, wheeled, and scanned him once more with red, piggy eyes, before he, too, shoved aside the swinging doors and passed from view.

The bartender crossed and stood before the solitary customer in placid interrogation. He had a smooth, good-natured, rather benevolent face—the bartender.

"Rye." Cassidy named his choice blithely, and deftly spun the quarter across the bar. When the other had set out glass and bottle and was turning toward the cash drawer, the boy spoke again.

"Don't split it," he said. "I'll be with you for another in a minute."

The violent chill which had been shaking Cassidy's spare body had ceased. In its place had come a furnacelike fever which burned his lips with every breath, and as he stood with his half-emptied glass clutched in one blue-veined hand, staring absently at the clock which hung on the wall over the shelf of bottles, he placed the clammy cold palm of his free hand to alternate cheeks in a vain effort to cool their throbbing heat.

According to the hands of the clock there was still another hour before midnight, and midnight, Cassidy had concluded, was late enough to wait for the single room in the house on the hill to go dark. As he stood there, with the warmth of the alcohol crawling through his veins, he decided that the waiting must always be the hardest part of such a job, and rather than dwell upon it, he drained the rest of the glass and let his mind

drift back over the fragment of conversation which he had overheard.

The man whom they had spoken of as "Gentleman" was without doubt an outside man—a runner—nice mannered and a fancy dresser, from his name. And Morgan—

As he reached for the bottle and tilted it over the glass, Cassidy turned in frank interrogation to the placid-faced barkeeper.

"What's Morgan in this village, anyway?" he asked.

A pause followed the question. The barkeeper's narrowed eyes crept shiftily across Cassidy's face; then, as if the lean, dripping, shivering body and hawklike features were more than enough reassurance, he smiled away his suspicion.

"Stranger?" he countered talkatively. Cassidy nodded.

"Chicawgo?" the barkeeper persisted.

Then Cassidy set his glass down with slow, thin-fingered grace and stared at him. The boy's lips peeled back and twitched for a second with unutterable scorn. Suddenly he laughed aloud—a harsh, rasping cackle of vast contempt.

"Who—me?" he sneered. "Me—from that burg! Wake up, bo—look me over!" His eyes burned across the rim of his lifted glass. "I'm from little old N'Yawk!"

The barkeeper waved one hand in deprecating apology.

"My mistake," he said, and then returned to Cassidy's first question.

"Morgan's chief of police. City election's coming in less'n a month. They're howlin' for reform up on the hill, and Grant—state's attorney—'s got pipe dreams of Washington, D. C."

Cassidy nodded his comprehension.

"Him?" he went on monosyllabically, and jerked one thumb over his shoulder in the direction which the thick-waisted man in evening clothes had taken a moment before.

"You must be a stranger," he decided, and then: "That's Garvice," he said, and with one arm he swept the whole room with a vast gesture of proprietorship. "How long you aimin' to linger?"

Cassidy eyed the face of the clock and yawned.

"Me?" he replied. "A-a-h, I'm goin' home—I'm hittin' the cinders to-night."

Another customer entered and claimed the barkeeper's attention. Cassidy crossed to one of the deep, leather-cushioned chairs and sat down, tentatively at first, as if in experiment, settling back more comfortably when the gruff invitation to move along failed to materialize. He closed his eyes and little by little relaxed until his whole lean body lay limp and asprawl, every inch of him throbbing and tingling deliciously. Once, when he coughed his throaty, gurgling rattle, the man behind the bar threw one swift glance toward him and opened his lips as if to speak—and then closed them without a word.

The hour hand of the clock had crept close up to the mark of twelve when Cassidy swung to his feet again, wincing a little at the shooting pains which the effort cost him. One instant he hesitated at the door while his hands explored the pockets of his coat and made certain that the soft lump of putty and the small three-cornered file were still there. With the lazily good-natured farewell of the barkeeper still fresh in his ears, he stood for a moment after the door had swung shut behind him, while he coughed and spat red on the snow.

Just once after that he spoke again, as if thinking aloud, as he retraced his crooked course around corners and through dark alleys toward the house on the hill.

"The Gentleman—outside man," he summed it up. "Comin' in wit' somebody on the midnight." He panted with the struggle to keep fresh air in his broken lungs. "No rough stuff—call

Garvice at once. Now ain't that a dirty deal to give a decent girl?"

The house on the corner was dark.

Without even a pause to make certain that the coast was clear, Cassidy cut swiftly across the lawn and glided up the steps into the dense shadow of the vines that shielded the wide veranda. The snow was still coming down in a thick curtain, which made it impossible for him to see more than ten paces ahead or behind, and he figured that it would render him just as invisible to any chance pedestrian. The only thing which really bothered him was the noise of the water bubbling in his shoes as he tiptoed to the nearest window and stood, his sharp face pressed to the pane, eyes screened by his hands, trying to penetrate the inner darkness.

There had been a fire on the open grate. Standing there with his face against the cold glass, Cassidy saw the glow of a few live coals still flickering among the embers. The fierce, alcohol-engendered heat which had warmed his body for the moment was flagging again, and the boy's fingers trembled with eagerness as well as cold when he drew the little three-cornered file and the lump of putty from his pocket and went to work.

In spite of his numb hands he made a fairly clean job of it. The little circle of glass came away with almost no noise at all. Cassidy heaved an audible sigh of thankfulness as he reached through and turned the window catch and lifted the sash. His vaguely formed plan had been that of swift and instant action; he had decided to be satisfied with anything that his hands encountered first—anything of ample intrinsic value and sufficient ease of disposal—and to make a quick get-away; but with the warm inner air upon his face, Cassidy forgot momentarily that admirably simple scheme. Instinctively, after he had closed the window noiselessly behind him, he crept across

through the darkness, his hands groping before him for furniture—crept eagerly across to the few embers in the grate. And when a chain clicked with staccato sharpness and set the light from the shaded reading lamp upon the table in the middle of the room flooding to all four walls, Cassidy was crouching in a huddled heap before the dying fire, his long, thin hands stretched far out of his soaked coat sleeves, wooing what little heat there was left in the ashes.

For a long time Cassidy never moved a muscle; his lean, dripping body froze into immobility as he sat there, huddled back upon his haunches. Then, slowly, his head came around until he faced the light—until he faced the stubby gun in the hand of a man who was sitting, wrapped in an old, threadbare red robe, close beside the table, one outstretched hand still holding the chain which dangled from the lamp's electric bulb. He was a big man, huge in a big-framed, bony way—with a wide, tight, fascinating homely mouth, and hard eyes half shadowed by thick brows. One foot, thickly swathed in bandages, protruded from the hem of the red robe, resting upon a low hassock almost at the boy's feet. All this Cassidy took in with the first haunted, sweeping glance, but with the strange preference which the human brain always seems to have for the trivial and immaterial in every great crisis, it was the picture lying on the man's wide lap—a picture of a young girl in a long black riding skirt—upon which his eyes dwelt longest.

Crouching there he shivered—he shook with one of those violent, uncontrollable fits of shuddering which rattled him from head to foot. A smile stole across the features of the watching man, and Cassidy had long before learned what one might expect from men who smiled like that.

"You're a little unstrung, my friend."

The man spoke softly, but his quiet voice bit like a steel drill. "A trifle nerve-racking, I'll admit—rather disconcerting to you. But try to pull yourself together."

Then Cassidy moved. Slowly and jerkily, as if each stiffened joint were complaining with the motion, he raised himself until he stood erect, back to the fireplace, like a grotesque scarecrow in the rags that were plastered flat against his body. He still shuddered spasmodically, but he flinched not so much as an inch before the muzzle of the stubby little gun. With his hands resting upon his narrow hips he stood, a wolfish snarl baring his teeth, and gave the man in the chair smile for smile. The only difference was that in Cassidy's smile there was no mirth.

"Don't worry over me nerve," Cassidy growled. "It ain't the gat that's got me shakin'. I'm only cold."

The smile on the face of the sitting man gradually faded—and then appeared again. Once, as he waited, scanning Cassidy's strained, twisted features and tense body, he slowly nodded his head.

"Sit down," he invited, at last, in the same level tones, and with a little twist of the revolver he indicated a chair that stood close beside the dying fire.

Again Cassidy snarled back at him wolfishly.

"I'll take mine a-standin' on me two feet," he answered.

"Sit down—please," the smooth voice emphasized—commanding this time—and Cassidy, knowing what was best, groped behind him, found the chair, and obeyed.

There came another silence while the thin-lipped, angular-featured man with iron-gray hair searched his visitor's face.

"A strange coincidence," he mused softly, talking more to himself than to the other; "a very strange coincidence, I should say." Cassidy wasn't so cer-

tain now of the biting sarcasm of the words. The man in the red robe pointed with his free hand toward a book open and down-faced on the table beside him. "Here we sit, you and I, in the very same situation which every author has incorporated in a story at one time or another, I dare say, until it has become—well, distinctly hackneyed. Don't you agree with me?"

Cassidy's hot eyes had not wavered an inch from the big-mouthed, hard-eyed face.

"I don't getch yer." His twisted lips sneered back.

The man at the table went on imperturbably.

"Distinctly hackneyed," he reiterated, "and yet, had you timed your arrival a scant half hour earlier, you would have surprised me at the climax of just such a tale—and more or less diverted by it, I must confess. And now that the opportunity has come so happily to hand, I must confess, too, that I am tempted to play the thing through, for a little while at least, according to what seems to be the accepted formula. After having asked you to be seated, I believe the next thing is to inquire the name of the—er—unexpected visitor. Your name, my friend," he urged.

"Cassidy."

The boy spat the word into his face, and a sibilant oath rolled from his tongue after it.

The man at the table smiled again.

"Surely, surely," he agreed. "Merely Cassidy—and just as good a name as any other, no doubt. Well, then, Cassidy, maybe you can clear up one question which really perplexes me. In these stories in which the—er—nocturnal stranger is suddenly confronted by the master of the house, some reason usually develops which prompts the latter to allow the former to go free. Very often it is a starving family—in fact, that is the reason in such a large percentage of the cases that it is very

wearisome. Now, such a proceeding had always appealed to me as nothing but sentimental flapdoodle, if you follow my meaning, Cassidy. It's just about on a par with the reasoning of a woman who marries a man to reform him. Now, to vary the program, it would be amusing if I asked you to go to the telephone there on the wall and call three O double O—that's police headquarters, Cassidy. It would be delightfully new—and rather amusing, don't you think so?"

Cassidy's feet were drawn up under the chair. He was waiting for that gun muzzle to waver—waiting for it to waver just the littlest bit from his chest.

"It might be funny"—his words slurred hoarsely—"it might be funny—but it ain't so damned funny, neither!"

The man nodded his appreciation.

"Admirable, Cassidy, admirable! But don't try to beat the gun—oh, it's in your eyes—but don't you try it. Now, I have always maintained that 'once a thief, always a thief' comes pretty close to the mark. It makes a pretty fair working rule, I've found; and when I make the introduction mutual and name myself John Grant, district at—ah, I see you have been previously informed—you will agree that I have had ample opportunity to study the matter at first hand. But the trouble is, I find, that it always takes exceptions to make a rule hold water. I wonder, Cassidy, are you an exception?"

For a moment Cassidy was silent. Then the boy's tense body rocked forward, fists clenched until the nails bit deep into palm, lips peeled back till his teeth showed to the gums, his eyelids narrowed to slits through which his pale eyes glowed, bitter, baleful, venomous. He knew now—he understood. He was being played with—played with as a cat plays with a mouse before she crushes it. And Cassidy leaned forward, crouching lynxlike, his outthrust face a deadly menace and cursed him—he

cursed the man in the red robe with all the hideous perfection of profanity that his twenty years on the streets had taught him.

"Play your game, you—" he choked. "Have all the fun you want—and when you git through, call in your flatfeet—call 'em in—but don't think you can make me squeal!"

He gasped for breath to go on, but the rattle bursting in his throat drowned the curses. He was too breathless to speak when the violent paroxysm of coughing was over, but his malevolent gaze was more eloquent than words could have been as he sat and wiped away the trickle of blood from the corners of his mouth upon his wet coat sleeve. And while he glared, Cassidy saw the sardonic gleam of amusement fade from the eyes of the man in the red robe—he saw the wide lips loosen, until the hard face was hard no longer. That man leaned forward instead, and put one hand upon Cassidy's thin knee.

"You're right, Cassidy," he said slowly. "You're right. It was a dirty game I was playing you—it's always a dirty game to rub it into a man when he's down. And you didn't whimper—you didn't squeal—you didn't try to beg off! You're the exception, Cassidy. I thought maybe you might be, even while I sat here and listened to you cutting a hole in my perfectly good window, instead of trying the doors first. I only wanted to be sure—I just wanted to be certain, do you see? And now, suppose you sit back in that chair a little—will you, if I put the gun down on the table? So-o-o—that's better." He leaned forward, huge hands upon his knees, his gaunt, bony face furrowed with solicitude, homely no longer.

"Now—why was it, Cassidy? Why? Hungry?"

Cassidy leaned back in the chair—leaned back and eased his aching body. Little by little as he stared, his baleful, threatening eyes opened until they

swam wide with bewilderment. He licked his lips.

"Cold?" the man persisted, and then Cassidy realized the wonder of it. He realized that it was gentleness which made the man's voice so strange in his ears. He tried to speak and failed, and made the effort again.

"I've been hungrier, I guess," he managed to say at last, and his own voice sounded far off. "And colder, too, back a stretch."

"Sick, Cassidy?" The man in the red robe tapped his chest with one long forefinger. "Lungs, Cassidy?"

The boy nodded mutely.

"Yup!" he said. "Sure—me lungs. They're—all—broke."

He paused, gulped hard, and then the words came piling out.

"It wasn't the cold—and any man can stand it to go a little short on the eats. But when a guy gits to spittin' pink he don't need no ambulance saw-bones to tell him what's comin'—not so's you'd notice it, he don't. An' I was broke—cold, flat broke—and I knew there wasn't no time to rustle a job. An' I sorter wanted to get home—that's on the level. I just wanted to get home before it come."

There was quiet for a moment. Then the man at the table raised his head again.

"New York, I suppose, Cassidy?"

Cassidy started—started and sat stiffly erect while he stared at him from eyes that burned with a great, glad light. His lips curved in the first genuine smile that had touched his face since his entrance.

"Say, you cert'nly got me right," he ejaculated admiringly. "You got me placed." Then he sneered with superlative disgust. "They was one guy to-night—suds-slinger in a red-lighter—ast me if I was in from Chicago. Now whadayuh know about that? Me—me from that jay burg!"

The big bony man in the red robe

sat and looked into Cassidy's sharp face, illuminated from within now, and shook his head; he looked away and cleared his throat, and looked back and shook his head once more.

"He lacked perception, Cassidy," he murmured thoughtfully. "He certainly was not a keen observer, was he? New York—and you only wanted to get home before it came! Hum-m-m, I see, Cassidy, I see."

Suddenly he leaned forward with startling abruptness, leveling one finger at the boy who sat shivering upon the chair.

"You're only an amateur, Cassidy," he exclaimed, his voice oddly brusque. "Don't try to agree with me—it isn't necessary. It's the first job you ever pulled off. You're only an amateur—and you want to get home—and maybe that simplifies matters, too. Under other circumstances I might be tempted to preach at you, Cassidy. I might be tempted to preach, as they always do in the stories—tell you to keep off the game and go straight—and that would only bore us both. But it's not necessary to-night, for there is blood in the corners of your lips now and, man to man, you know and I know, Cassidy, what that means. You've got to start early—you've got to start right away—if you're going to get there at all."

Cassidy was on his feet. The man fumbled in his pocket, pressed a roll of bills into the boy's hand without counting it, and tried to rise, too. The picture which had been lying face up in his lap dropped to the floor as he made the effort, and then he remembered. He picked it up again as he sank back into the chair, his eyes going from the face of the slender girl in the black riding habit to the heavily bandaged foot upon the hassock, and back once more.

"Why, I almost forgot," he murmured; then he tapped the photograph gently. "My daughter, Cassidy—my

daughter—and I expect her home to-night. She's coming in on the mid-night—it must be late. And you played in hard luck, even to-night, for if it hadn't been for that"—he indicated the bandaged foot with a little nod—"I'd have been at the station now to meet her, and you would have had a clear field here. You don't know what self-pity is, so it won't hurt you to tell you; but it only goes to strengthen a little theory which I have always believed: There's many a man with God's own soul in his body, Cassidy, who never had his chance!"

Cassidy's eyes dropped to the roll of bills in his hand, and then lifted again to the photograph. Then:

"She—she's got nice eyes," said Cassidy. Still he did not offer to move.

"There's enough money there to take you home, I guess," the man finished, "and you'd better start. They usually shake hands in the stories, Cassidy, and it's not a half-bad idea, either. Good night—and I hope you make it in time. Remember me to the big town—I used to call it home, myself."

Cassidy closed the front door softly behind him. The snow sifted down upon his upturned face, unheeded, while he stood, as if stupefied, on the top step of the porch. And once, while he was shuffling along down the long hill toward the still brightly lighted district below, he stopped talking aloud to himself long enough to stand beneath an arc light and count the roll of bills.

"Sixty yellow men," he blurted. "Sixty!" And, with utter irrelevance, "She sure did have nice eyes, too."

And then Cassidy did a strange thing—a reasonless thing—unless there was something greater than Cassidy's will or brain that directed his shuffling steps that night; for he himself looked up in bewildered astonishment with no recollection of how his two feet had brought him there, when he found himself once more outside the café door of the dark

hotel where he had spent his last quarter, barely an hour before. He stood there and scowled a moment, thinking only of the waste of time there had been in this long detour from the station. Then as his eyes caught the gleam of light across the sill beneath the door, he remembered.

"Coming in on the midnight—the Gentleman—Garvice—call him at once!"

Phrase by phrase, it all flashed back through Cassidy's brain, and a clock far across the city was booming the hour of one as he pushed the outer door open quietly and stepped inside.

"Maybe he'll gimme one drink," he excused his conduct to himself. "It's past closin' time, but he was a kind of a decent old cove. An' it'll warm me, too."

But when the boy turned toward the bar, with the whole room half lighted there before him, he found it deserted. Even the placid-faced barkeeper was gone, and Cassidy stood an instant, his face puzzled, before he caught the low hum of voices behind the swinging doors which led to the front of the house. Then, quicker than thought, for it was not thought but mere impulse which moved him, he slipped across the empty room—even his soaked, broken shoes making almost no noise in that swift, darting advance—and put his eyes to the crack between the doors. And while he stood and stared, Cassidy's shivering body began to stiffen, just as a hound that had burst through a thicket might stiffen and bristle at finding a wolf pack crunching the bones of the very quarry he had been trailing.

A low, nameless, droning sort of a growl began in Cassidy's throat and came singsonging through his lips as he stepped back a pace, trying to convince himself that his eyes had lied. But when he crouched again, his eyes glued to the crevice between the doors, and watched and listened, Cassidy be-

gan to understand—he began to grasp the meaning of Garvice's ghastly white face and loose, working lips; he grasped the meaning of the stupid fear rampant upon the pasty face of the smaller, dapper man who, he knew, was he they had called the Gentleman. Cassidy understood the shrunken terror in the features of the benevolent-faced bar-keeper, for, as he kneeled and stared, he found himself staring straight into the face of the girl of the picture—the girl who “had nice eyes.” But her face was white and pitifully frightened.

And something had gone wrong—in spite of Morgan's warning, something had gone most mightily wrong—for fear, stark, naked fear, was stalking there in that little back hallway beyond the bar.

With eyes flinging furtively around him, Cassidy slipped back a pace, and another, and still another, until his hand was groping behind him for the door. Only one thought drove him—the desire to get away and get away silently—to put distance between himself and that bad affair beyond the doors, which was no affair of his. It was a subconscious impulse, an instinct for self-preservation, and yet something stayed him even as his fingers closed over the knob.

“My daughter,” the man in the red robe had said. “And you played in hard luck, even to-night. Only for that”—Cassidy saw him again, nodding at the swathed foot on the low hassock—“only for that I would have gone to meet her, and you would have had a clear field. There's many a man with God's own soul in his body, Cassidy, who never had his chance!”

“Sixty bones,” he muttered to himself, and licked his cracking lips. “An’ he shook me hand—an’ said he hoped I’d make it.”

The slim girl was talking when Cassidy squatted once more at the crevice between the swinging doors. She was

pleading with Garvice in a soft voice that quavered and broke again and again.

“Please, I want to go to him immediately, doctor,” she was beginning. “Please—please! Don't you understand—don't you see I can't stand it—I can't stand the suspense any longer? You don't tell me—nobody says anything—I—I want to know how bad he is!”

Cassidy watched Garvice fight to steady his loose lips; he watched him try to smile—a sickly, horrible effort—and the nameless whimper began to rise again through the boy's lips when Garvice slipped one thick arm across the girl's slim shoulders with fatherly, comforting reassurance.

“In a few minutes—in just a few minutes, my dear girl. Please try now to pull yourself together a little. Try to believe me when I tell you that he still has an even chance.” Garvice's voice, even though it came huskily from his fat throat, was helping to steady him. “You must, Miss Grant, you must, for unless you do I cannot let you see him at all. I cannot, absolutely! It would be fatal to him now.

“Come, like a brave girl. Just run upstairs to the parlor and wait there for me—the first floor on the right, my dear—and I'll come to you immediately and bring you something that will help you to pull your nerves together.”

She turned—the slender, dark-haired girl—her lower lip caught tight between her teeth. But even that could not stifle the sob that broke from her as she climbed the stairs. Cassidy heard the sob—and the words that came, brokenly, with it.

“Thank God I had started back—thank God I did get here when he needed me! But why didn't they take him home when it happened, why didn't they—instead of bringing him here?”

The three men at the foot of the stairs stood and watched until she passed from view—they stood like stone

men, like statues of terror cut from rock. And then Garvice wheeled—wheeled like a madman.

"You fool—you dope-soaked, coke-blind fool, you!" he croaked, a little splutter of froth edging his lips. "Do you know what you've done—do you? Well, you've brought the wrong girl! That girl is Grant's daughter!"

With maniacal fury Garvice beat his fists into the stupidly blinking face of the little, dapper man—the one they had called the Gentleman. Cassidy, huddled beyond the doors, marveled that the fat, pudgy fists with all that weight behind them, could fall with such lack of force—so impotently. The Gentleman merely staggered under them, only blinking his glassy, yellow-white eyes dully, without going once to the floor, or even lifting his hands to shield his face.

When Garvice's strength was spent, and he stood gulping and hiccupping for breath, the barkeeper reached out one shaking hand and laid it upon the proprietor's arm.

"I—I better call a cab, hadn't I?" he whispered voicelessly. "I'll have a cab at the side door—and—and we'll tell her it was only a mistake. We—we'll send her home."

Garvice whirled at him, his round moon face purple now.

"A cab?" he wheezed, his own voice almost gone. "A cab—and send her home—to Grant? Do you want thirty years—that's as good as life—do you?" He choked and wrenched open his collar and swallowed noisily. "Find Bull," he ordered, "and mix her something. And for God's sake make it a regular one! Find Bull and send him up to me with it."

He stopped, with one foot upon the first step. A little understanding was beginning to glimmer even in the Gentleman's plasterlike face.

"Send her home," he repeated, and he laughed shrilly, "home to Grant?"

She'll never get home—she'll never go back—not while she's alive!"

When the barkeeper pushed aside the door and entered the small, half-dark café he stopped dead in his tracks, recoiling in abject terror as his eyes fell upon the figure of a man lying back in one of the deep, leather-padded chairs. Then, when his eyes recognized him, he drew a deep, shuddering gasp of relief, but his steps were falteringly unsteady as he crossed and shook Cassidy by the arm until the boy opened his eyes and blinked up at him—blinked with owl-like soberness, as a very drunken man always blinks.

"You gotta git out—shack now!" The barkeeper's teeth were chattering. "It's past closin' time. Git, now! Hear me?"

Cassidy rose laboriously, gripping the barkeeper's shoulder to steady himself. Again he blinked and waved one hand in a graceful gesture of acquiescence.

"'S all right, m' frien'," he stuttered. "'S all right!"

He turned and shuffled meekly to the door. But after that door had closed behind him and the barkeeper had disappeared down another passageway that ran back to the kitchen, Cassidy reappeared. He flashed back inside, with no need now for cautious deliberation, for he had kicked off his wet shoes outside. He whipped across the room to the swinging doors. The Gentleman, seated on the stairs and drowsily reviling himself, heard him come, saw his face, and understood. He tried to bar his way, and Cassidy beat him down—not with flabby, impotent blows, but with short, vicious, shoulder jolts that broke the skin and laid the flesh open raw. The Gentleman lay in a heap upon the floor and howled curses and fumbled for his gun, and he found it in time to fire once, wildly, as Cassidy raced up the stairs and around the corner.

Garvice had heard the shot. He had

unlocked the door and opened it a hand's breadth—just wide enough for his fat face to stare, pop-eyed, out into the hall. Through this opening lanced Cassidy, and Garvice fell back, staggering to keep his feet before that rush. For one instant Cassidy stood, long enough to slam the door and turn the key. Then he leaped, and missed—and Garvice screamed—and leaped again.

This time Cassidy's long fingers found the thick throat and sank and sank, until Garvice could scream no more. But with all his great weight he struggled to shake off that clinging body. He hurled himself against the wall—cast himself across the room, crashing to the floor with Cassidy always underneath, until it seemed that the bones in the starved body must shatter with the thudding blows. Yet Cassidy clung and only tightened his fingers.

He was fighting blindly—blind with hate. He had forgotten everything but his desire to kill the thing between his fingers—to feel it die slowly. Then he caught a glimpse of the white face of the girl crouched back in one corner, both hands clutched at her breast; he heard the heavy beat of feet upon the stairs and remembered, and his eyes cleared.

Again Garvice flung across the room, as a stricken bullock with a leopard at its throat might fling itself, and Cassidy, one hand still buried in the fat man's throat, swung wide and crashed against the white-covered table in the middle of the room—and reached out with his free hand as he swung.

It was a completely appointed table—completely arranged for two. Cassidy's long fingers closed lovingly over the bone handle of the curved carving knife as the table went over, and when he lashed back against Garvice's soft bulk, he struck—struck viciously. Garvice shuddered and gasped, grew limp and slipped to his knees, and rolled over

until his protruding eyes were hidden. There came the pound of feet outside the door—the crash of a heavy body against its panels. Cassidy whirled toward the girl.

"Down—down flat on the floor," he flung at her, and in white-faced, wordless obedience, she stretched her body flat, face down, against the baseboard.

Once! Twice! And then a third body hurtled against the door. He counted automatically. There were three of them, but before Cassidy turned the key in the lock with his fingers, he leaped high, just once, in the middle of the room and swung the heavy bone-handled carving knife by the blade-point. Every window in the room was sealed tight with closed blinds and drawn curtains. When the big globe above the spot where the table had stood was shattered by the blow, the room went dark—utterly, absolutely black—and Cassidy knew that he had evened up the odds.

Then with his own fingers he turned the key and opened the door, and when they came crashing in—the thick-shouldered, thick-necked attendant called Bull, roaring for a light as he came; the Gentleman, his blood-streaked face twisted with a thirst to kill, and the barkeeper, whose knees threatened at each step to cave beneath him—Cassidy slammed it shut, and turned the key once more. And he had leaped the width of the room and landed catlike, without a sound, upon his bare feet, in the opposite corner, when the guns in the hands of Bull and the Gentleman laced the darkness with flame. The bullets failed to find him—and already they were afraid to fire again. Cassidy crouched close to the wall and cuddled his long knife and waited. He had not merely evened up the odds; he had swung the odds his way.

Time passed—minutes—hours—ages! And Cassidy still remained flattened against the wall, smiling to himself, and

waited. He smiled sneeringly, pityingly, for those others already groping forward for him now, in the blackness. Cassidy was at home. It was the thing he knew best of all—how to fight in the dark.

Ages passed.

Then Cassidy's body began to tighten as he heard heavy breathing coming closer and still closer toward him along the wall from the door. He crouched, balancing himself upon his bare toes, the bone handle of the knife cuddled in his palm, and reached into his pocket on the new impulse born of all the animal cunning of his brain. Noiselessly he brought out the little three-cornered file, and with deliberate calculation he tossed it into the black void in front of him—tossed it toward the heavy breathing that was creeping closer and closer upon him. And when it fell, with a jingling, steely tinkle, the thing for which he had hoped answered the toss.

A gun roared, spurting flame so close that it singed Cassidy's cheek, lighting up for one vivid instant the livid, blood-streaked face of the Gentleman, half an arm's length behind him, there in the darkness. And at the flash a man grunted across against the wall where the file had fallen—a man grunted gutturally and floundered and thrashed upon the floor.

The heavy breathing which had been edging in closer and closer was hushed, too, for with his drug-crazed brain going to pieces under the strain, the Gentleman had fired—fired crazily at the first sound, and his bullet had gone home—home into the Bull's body. And Cassidy, in that same breath, balanced on his toes and lunged under that point of flame that had burned his cheek—lunged with all his weight behind the knife point. The Gentleman went down, just as Garvice had fallen, with a deep sigh, and then rolled over on his face.

Cassidy blundered recklessly into a

chair—into the overturned table—in his haste to find the door. When he had inserted the key and thrown the door open and the light came flooding in, he turned and found the barkeeper just as he knew he would find him, a trembling, quaking mass of flesh. He was the wrong kind of stuff for that sort of a game—the barkeeper.

The girl still lay prone on the floor at the other end of the room, her face buried in her arms. Cassidy half lifted, half dragged her to her feet, and when she opened her eyes and saw what lay huddled there upon the floor, Garvice and Bull and the Gentleman, a twisted heap of clean linen and dapper garments, she gave the first sound that had passed her lips since Cassidy had flashed into the room. She cried aloud, and threw one hand across her face to shut out the sight, and swayed weakly. It was Cassidy's voice, close to her ear, lashing her savagely, that brought her back.

"None o' that," he rasped. "You ain't got no time to pull any faintin' stuff here! You gotta hang on and keep a-comin'!"

It steadied her. It put sanity once more in her brain and strength in her body. On swift feet she followed when Cassidy leaped down the stairs and whirled through the still deserted bar-room, the muzzle of the Gentleman's revolver swinging before him. And when a window crashed up overhead—and then another—she was outside and running swiftly, freely, beside Cassidy, who ran barefooted in the snow.

At first he touched her elbow to guide her as they cut corners; he drew her this way and that as they threaded dark alleys, until suddenly he realized that she had found her own bearings, for she was leading the way.

From there on Cassidy began to fall back and lose ground. He ran more and more heavily, choking, gurgling, gasping for breath. Once he had to

stop entirely to cough and clear his throat of the blood that was smothering him. Once she tried to talk—she turned and gasped brokenly over her shoulder.

"They said he had been hurt! They said——"

Every breath that the boy drew was a long, whistling rattle. He waved one hand and checked her.

"You don't—have to—tell me!" he managed to jerk out. "An' I gotta save my breath."

They ran silently after that—steadily. But when the slender girl cut across the lawn through the knee-deep snow toward the house on the corner, she had to slacken her pace and wait for him, as he staggered along drunkenly in the rear. He stumbled and fell heavily, and she tried to help him to his feet. He pushed her hands away. By himself he swayed erect, dragging his wet coat sleeve across his lips. But he went on again a few yards, only to stumble once more and lurch face down across the steps. This time he did not have even strength enough left to push aside her arms.

"They've hurt you!" she cried then. "They've killed you! O-o-o-h!" And

her voice rose in a little pitying moan as she stooped and tugged with all the strength of her young body to raise him.

Cassidy tried to answer, but the gurgle that began deep in his throat choked the words. The snow on the steps near his mouth was red with a pool that widened and grew steadily a deeper crimson.

Cassidy tried again.

"That bunch—get me?" His words came in great, sobbing blobs of breath, yet he managed to sneer. "That bunch—of rubes! I ain't hurt—I'm only tired. No, I won't try—I ain't got time to come in."

He struggled, raised himself dizzily upon one elbow, and nodded his bristly head toward the window—the window with the little circular hole in its upper pane.

"I ain't got time," he panted on. "I'm goin'—home. But he's in there—he's settin' up for you. There's nothin' for you to be cryin' about—you're all right, now, ain't yuh? You—you just go along in. An' when you tell him—when you explain it to him—just tell him Cassidy brought yuh—Cassidy from N'Yawk!"

A MAIDEN'S IDEAL OF A HUSBAND

GENTEEL in personage,
Conduct and equipage,
Noble by heritage,
Generous and free;
Brave, not romantic;
Learned, not pedantic;
Frolic, not frantic—
This must he be.

Honor maintaining,
Meanness disdaining,
Still entertaining,
Engaging and new.
Neat, but not finical;
Sage, but not cynical;
Never tyrannical,
But ever true.

Henry Carey.

by Leonard Merrick

Author of

*A Chair on
the Boulevard*



The INFIDELITY of MONSIEUR NOULENS

WHENEVER they talk of him whom I will call "Noulens"—of his novels, his method, the eccentricities of his talent—some one is sure to say: "But what comrades, he and his wife! They are devoted to each other!" You are certain to hear it; and as often as I hear it myself I think of what he told me that evening—I remember the shock I had.

At the beginning I had expected little. When I went in, his wife said: "I fear he will be poor company; he has to write a short story for *La Voix*, and cannot find a theme—he has been beating his brains all day." So far from anticipating emotions, I had proposed dining there another night instead, but she would not allow me to leave.

"Something you say may suggest a *motif* to him," she declared, "and he can write, or dictate, the story in an hour, when you have gone."

So I stayed, and after dinner he lay on the sofa, bewailing the fate that had made him an author. The salon communicated with his study, and through the open door he had the invitation of his writing table—the little sheaf of paper that she had put in readiness for him, the lighted lamp, the pile of cigarettes. I knew that she hoped the view would stimulate him, but it was soon apparent that he had ceased to think of a story altogether. He spoke of Antoine in his new part, of a book by Anatole France, of the *revue* at Parisiana. Then, in the hall, the telephone bell rang, and madame rose to receive the message. "Allô! Allô!"

She did not come back. There was a pause; and presently he murmured.

"I wonder if a stranger has been moved to telephone a plot to me!"

"What?" I said.

"It sounds mad, *hein?* But it once

happened—on just such a night as this, when my mind was just as blank. Really! Out of the silence a woman told me a beautiful story. Of course, I never used it, nor do I know if she made use of it herself; but I have never forgotten. For years I could not hear a telephone bell without trembling. Even now, when I am working late, I find myself hoping for her voice."

"The story was so wonderful as that?"

He threw a glance into the study, as if to assure himself that his wife had not entered it from the hall.

"Can you believe that a man may learn to love—tenderly and truly love—a woman he has never met?" he asked me.

"I don't think I understand you."

"There has been only one woman in my life who was all in all to me," he said, "and I never saw her."

How was I to answer? I looked at him.

"After all, what is there incredible in it?" he demanded. "Do we give our love to a face, or to a temperament? I swear to you that I could not have known that woman's temperament more intimately if we had made our confidences in each other's arms. I knew everything of her, except the trifles which a stranger learns in the moment of being presented—her height, her complexion, her name, whether she was married or single. No, these things I never knew. But her tastes, her sympathies, her soul—these, the secret truths of the woman—were as familiar to me as to herself."

He hesitated.

"I am in a difficulty. If I seem to disparage my wife, I shall be a cad; if I let you think we have been as happy together as people imagine, you will not understand the importance of what I am going to tell you. I will say this: before our honeymoon was over, I bored her fearfully. While we were

engaged, I had talked to her of my illusions about herself; when we were married, I talked to her of my convictions about my art. The change appalled her. She was chilled, crushed, dumfounded. I looked to her to share my interests. For response she yawned—and wept.

"Oh, her tears! her hourly tears! the tears that drowned my love!

"The philosopher is made, not born; in the first few years I rebelled furiously. I wanted a companion, a confidante, and I had never felt so desperately alone.

"We had a flat in the Rue de Sontay then, and the telephone was in my workroom. One night, late, as I sat brooding there, the bell startled me, and a voice—a woman's voice—said:

"'I am so lonely; I want to talk to you before I sleep.'

"I cannot describe the strangeness of that appeal reaching me so suddenly out of the distance. I knew that it was a mistake, of course, but it was as if, away in the city, some nameless soul had echoed the cry in my own heart. I obeyed an impulse; I said:

"'I, too, am very lonely—I believe I have been waiting for you.'

"There was a pause, and then she asked, dismayed:

"'Who are you?'

"'Not the man you thought,' I told her. 'But a very wistful one.'

"'I heard soft laughter. 'How absurd!' she murmured.

"'Be merciful,' I went on; 'we are both sad, and Fate clearly intends us to console each other. It cannot compromise you, for I do not even know who you are. Stay and talk to me for five minutes.'

"'What do you ask me to talk about?'

"'Oh, the subject to interest us both—yourself.'

"'After a moment she answered: 'I am shaking my head.'

"'It is very unfeeling of you,' I

said. 'And I have not even the compensation of seeing you do it.'

"Imagine another pause, and then her voice in my ear again:

"I will tell you what I can do for you—I can tell you a story.'

"The truth would please me more,' I owned. 'Still, if my choice must be made between your story and your silence, certainly I choose your story.'

"I applaud your taste,' she said. 'Are you comfortable—are you sitting down?'

"I sat down, smiling. 'Madame——'

"She did not reply.

"Then, 'Mademoiselle——'

"Again no answer.

"Well, say, at least, if I have your permission to smoke while I listen to you.'

"She laughed. 'You carry courtesy far!'

"How far?' I asked, quickly.

"But she would not even hint from what neighborhood she was speaking to me. 'Attend!' she commanded—and began.

"It is the story of two lovers,' she said. 'Paul and Rosamonde. They were to have married, but Rosamonde died too soon. When she was dying, she gave him a curl of the beautiful brown hair that he used to kiss. "Au revoir, dear love," she whispered; "it will be very stupid in heaven until you come. Remember that I am waiting for you, and be faithful. If your love for me fades, you will see that curl of mine fade, too."

"Every day through the winter Paul strewed flowers on her tomb, and sobbed. And in the spring he strewed flowers, and sighed. And in the summer he paid that flowers might be strewn there for him. Sometimes when he looked at the dead girl's hair he thought that it was paler than it had been, but as he looked at it seldom now, he could easily persuade himself that he was mistaken.

"Then he met a woman who made him happy again; and the wind chased the withered flowers from Rosamonde's grave and left it bare. One day, Paul's wife found a little packet that lay forgotten in his desk; she opened it jealously before he could prevent her. Paul feared that the sight would give her pain, and watched her with anxious eyes. But in a moment she was laughing. "What an idiot I am!" she exclaimed. "I was afraid that it was the hair of some girl you had loved!" The curl was snow white.'

"Her fantastic tale," continued Noulens, "which was told with an earnestness that I cannot reproduce, impressed me very much. I did not offer any criticism, I did not pay her any compliment; I said simply:

"Who are you?'

"That,' she warned me, 'is a question that you must not ask. Well, are you still bored?'

"No.'

"A little interested?'

"Very.'

"I, too, am feeling happier than I did. And now, adieu!'

"Wait,' I begged. 'Tell me when I shall speak to you again.'

"She hesitated; and I assure you that I had never waited for a woman's answer with more suspense while I held her hand, than I waited for the answer of this woman whom I could not see. 'To-morrow?' I urged. 'In the morning?'

"In the morning it would be difficult.'

"The afternoon?'

"In the afternoon it would be impossible.'

"Then the evening—at the same hour?'

"Perhaps,' she faltered, 'if I am free.'

"My number,' I told her, 'is five-five-two nought-nine. Can you write it now?'

"I have written it."

"Please repeat, so that there may be no mistake."

"Five-five-two nought-nine. Correct?"

"Correct. I am grateful."

"Good night."

"Good night. Sleep well."

"You may suppose that on the morrow I remembered the incident with a smile, that I ridiculed the emotion it had roused in me? You would be wrong. I recalled it more and more curiously; I found myself looking forward to the appointment with an eagerness that was astonishing. We had talked for about twenty minutes, hidden from each other—half Paris, perhaps, dividing us; I had nothing more tangible to expect this evening. Yet I experienced all the sensations of a man who waits for an interview, for an embrace. What did it mean? I was bewildered. The possibility of love at first sight I understood; but might the spirit also recognize an affinity by telephone?"

"There is a phrase in *feuilletons* that had always irritated me—'To his impatience it seemed that the clock had stopped.' It had always struck me as absurd. Since that evening I have never condemned the phrase, for honestly I thought more than once that the clock had stopped. By and by, to increase the tension, my wife, who seldom entered my workroom, opened the door. She found me idle, and was moved to converse with me. *Mon Dieu!* Now that the hour approached at last, madame was present, with the air of having settled herself for the night!"

"The hands of the clock moved on—and always faster now. If she remained till the bell rang, what was I to do? To answer that I had 'some one with me' would be intelligible to the lady, but it would sound suspicious to my wife. To answer that I was 'busy'

would sound innocent to my wife, but it would be insulting to the lady. To disregard the bell altogether would be to let madame go to the telephone herself! I tell you I perspired.

"Under Providence, our cook rescued me. There came a timid knock, and then the figure of the cook, her eyes inflamed, her head swathed in some extraordinary garment. She had a raging toothache—would madame have the kindness to give her a little cognac? The ailments of the cook always arouse in human nature more solicitude than the ailments of any other servant. Madame's sympathy was active—I was saved!"

"The door had scarcely closed when *tr-r-r-r-ng*, the signal came.

"'Good-evening,' from the voice. 'So you are here to meet me?'"

"'Good evening,' I said; 'I would willingly go farther to meet you.'"

"'Be thankful that the rendezvous was your flat—listen to the rain! Come, own that you congratulated yourself when it began! 'Luckily I can be gallant without getting wet,' you thought. Really, I am most considerate—you keep a dry skin, you waste no time in reaching me, and you need not even trouble to change your coat.'"

"'It sounds very cozy,' I admitted; 'but there is one drawback to it all—I do not see you.'"

"'That may be more considerate of me still! I may be reluctant to banish your illusions. Isn't it probable that I am plain—or at least elderly? I may even be an authoress, with ink on her fingers. By the bye, monsieur, I have been rereading one of your books since last night.'"

"'Oh, you know my name now? I am gratified to have become more than a telephonic address to you. May I ask if we have ever met?'"

"'We never spoke till last night, but I have seen you often.'"

"'You, at any rate, can have no illu-

sions to be banished. What a relief! I have endeavored to talk as if I had a romantic bearing; now that you know how I look, I can be myself.

"I await your next words with terror," she said. "What shock is in store for me? Speak gently."

"Well, speaking gently, I am very glad that you were put on to the wrong number last night. At the same time, I feel a constraint, a difficulty; I cannot talk to you frankly, cannot be serious—it is as if I showed my face while you were masked."

"Yes, it is true—I understand," she said. "And even if I were to swear that I was not unworthy of your frankness, you would still be doubtful of me, I suppose."

"Madame——"

"Oh, it is natural! I know very well how I must appear to you," she exclaimed; "a coquette, with a new pastime—a vulgar coquette, besides, who tries to pique your interest by an air of mystery. Believe me, monsieur, I am forbidden to unmask. Think lightly of me if you want—I have no right to complain—but believe as much as that. I do not give you my name simply because I may not."

"Madame," I replied, "so far from wishing to force your confidence, I assure you that I will never inquire who you are, never try to find out."

"And you will talk frankly, unconstrainedly, all the same?"

"Ah, you are too illogical to be elderly and plain," I demurred. "You resolve to remain a stranger to me—and I bow to your decision—but, on the other hand, a man makes confidences only to his friends."

"There was a long pause; and when I heard the voice again it trembled."

"Adieu, monsieur."

"Adieu, madame," I said.

"No sooner was she gone, than I would have given almost anything to bring her back. For a long while I

sat praying that she would ring again. I watched the telephone as if it had been her window, the door of her home—something that could yield her to my view. During the next few days I grudged every minute that I was absent from the room. I took my meals in it. Never had I had the air of working so indefatigably, and, in truth, I did not write a line. 'I suppose you have begun a new romance?' said my wife. In my soul I feared that I had finished it!"

Noulens sighed—he clasped his hands on his head. The dark hair, the thin, restless fingers were all that I could see of him where I sat. Some seconds passed; I wondered whether there would be time for me to hear the rest before his wife returned.

"In my soul I feared that I had finished it," he repeated. "Extraordinary as it appears, I was in love with a woman I had never seen. Each time that bell sounded, my heart seemed to try to choke me. It had been my grievance, since we had the telephone installed, that we heard nothing of it excepting that we owed another check for its use; but now, by a maddening coincidence, everybody I had ever met took to ringing me up about trifles, and agitating me twenty times a day."

"At last, one night—when expectation was almost dead—she called to me again. Oh, but her voice was humble! My friend, it is piteous when we love a woman, to hear her humbled. I longed to take her hands, to fold my arms about her—I abased myself, that she might regain her pride. She heard how I had missed and sorrowed for her; I owned that she was dear to me."

"And then began a companionship—strange as you may find the word—which was the sweetest my life has held. We talked together daily. This woman, whose whereabouts, whose face, whose name were all unknown to me, became the confidante of my

disappointments and my hopes. If I worked well, my thought would be: 'To-night I shall have good news to give her.' If I worked ill: 'Never mind, by and by she will encourage me!' There was not a page in my next novel that I did not read to her; never a doubt beset me in which I did not turn for her sympathy and advice.

"Well, how have you got on?"

"Oh, I am so troubled this evening, dear!"

"Poor fellow! Tell me all about it. I tried to come to you sooner, but I couldn't get away."

"Like that! We talked as if she were really with me. My life was no longer desolate; the indifference in my home no longer grieved me. All the interest, the love, the inspiration I had hungered for was now given to me by a woman who remained invisible."

Noulens paused again. In the pause I got up to light a cigarette, and—I shall never forget it!—I saw the bowed figure of his wife beyond the study door. It was only a glimpse I had, but the glimpse was enough to make my heart stand still—she leaned over the table, her face hidden by her hand.

I tried to warn, to signal to him—he did not see me. I could do nothing—nothing at all—without doubling her humiliation by the knowledge that I had witnessed it. If he would only look at me!

"Listen," he went on, rapidly; "I was happy, I was young again—and there was a night when she said to me: 'It is for the last time.'"

"Six words! But for a moment I had no breath, no life, to answer them."

"Speak!" she cried out. "You are frightening me!"

"What has happened?" I stammered. "Trust me, I implore you!"

"I heard her sobbing—and minutes seemed to pass. It was horrible. I thought my heart would burst while I

shuddered at her sobs—the sobbing of a woman I could not reach.

"I can tell you nothing," she said, when she was calmer; 'only that we are speaking together for the last time.'

"But why—why? Is it that you are leaving France?"

"I cannot tell you," she repeated; 'I have had to swear that to myself.'

"Oh, I raved to her! I was desperate; I tried to wring her name from her then—I besought her to confess where she was hidden. The space between us frenzied me. It was frightful, it was like a nightmare, that struggle to tear the truth from a woman whom I could not clasp or see."

"My dear," she said, 'there are some things that are beyond human power. They are not merely difficult, or unwise, or mad—they are impossible. You have begged the impossible of me. You will never hear me again, it is far from likely we shall ever meet—and if one day we do, you will not even know that it is I. But—I love you. I should like to think that you believe it, for I love you very dearly. Now say "good-by" to me. My arms are round your neck, dear heart—I kiss you on the lips.'

"It was the end. She was lost. A moment before, I had felt her presence in my senses; now I stood in an empty room, mocked by a futile apparatus. My friend, if you have ever yearned to see a woman whose whereabouts you did not know—ever exhausted yourself tramping some district in the hope of finding her—you may realize what I feel; for remember that by comparison your task was easy—I am even ignorant of this woman's *arrondissement* and appearance. She left me helpless. The telephone had given her—the telephone had taken her away. All that remained to me was the mechanism on a table."

Noulens turned on the couch at last;

and, turning, he could not fail to see his wife. I was spellbound.

"Mechanism on a table," he repeated, with a prodigious yawn of relief. "That is all. If thou hast written it, my own, then the story is finished!"

"Good!" said madame, cheerily. She bustled in, fluttering pages of shorthand. "But I complain, old angel, that the tale of Paul and Rosamonde is thrown away—it is an extravagance, telling two tales for the price of one."

"You are right, my soul. But, on the other hand, thou knowest that I invented it months ago, and could not make it long enough for it to be of any use."

"That is true," she agreed. "Well, we will be liberal, then—we will include it!" She noticed my amazement. "What ails monsieur?"

Noulens gave a guffaw. "I am afraid monsieur did not recognize that I was dictating to you," he chuckled. "By the bye, it was fortunate that some one telephoned to us just now—that started my plot for me! Who was it?"

"It was *La Voix*," she laughed, "inquiring if the story would be done in time!"

Oh, yes, indeed, they are comrades, those two—you are certain to hear it! And as often as I hear it myself, I think of what he told me that evening—I remember how he took me in.



DRIVING A HEN

By James M. Bailey, the Danbury News Man.

WHEN a woman has a hen to drive into the coop she takes hold of her hoops with both hands, and shakes them quietly toward the delinquent, and says: "Shoo there!" The hen takes one look at the object, to convince herself that it's a woman, and then stalks majestically into the coop in perfect disgust of the sex. A man don't do that way. He goes out of doors and says: "It is singular nobody in this house can drive a hen but myself." And, picking up a stick of wood, hurls it at the offending biped, and observes, "Get in there, you thief."

The hen immediately loses her reason, and dashes to the opposite end of the yard. The man straightway dashes after her. She comes back again with her head down, her wings out, and followed by an assortment of stove wood, fruit cans, and coal-clinkers, with a much puffing and very mad man in the rear. Then she skims up on the stoop, and under the barn, and over a fence or two, and round the house, and back again to the coop, all the while talking as only an excited hen can talk, and all the while followed by things convenient for handling, and by a man whose coat is on the sawbuck, and whose hat is on the ground, and whose perspiration and profanity appear to have no limit.

By this time the other hens have come out to take a hand in the debate, and help dodge the missiles—and then the man says every hen on the place shall be sold in the morning, and puts on his things and goes down the street, and the woman dons her hoops, and has every one of those hens housed and contented in two minutes, and the only sound heard on the premises is the hammering by the eldest boy as he mends the broken pickets.

by
Storm Jameson
Author of



"Monotony"

The
Pitiful Wife

SO good of you to come all this way to see me."

Jane smiled. "I came perhaps twenty miles. You crossed the Atlantic to visit me. Or, at least, that is what you wrote. It is more likely that you came to steal our trade and gathered me in as a make-weight."

The man regarded her with a gently humorous air.

"Don't chatter, darling," he said softly.

Jane's glance faltered. The drawing, intimate voice troubled her.

"You chattered two years ago," he went on.

"I found it a poor enough defense," she retorted. "Have you no scruples?"

He laughed outright.

"Scruples? My dear, I adore you. Moreover, it was by your own wish that I refrained from conducting my love affair with shameless candor."

The pallor of her small face showed

more strangely clear when the flame had burned out in it.

"It was hardly that," she said smoothly.

"Hardly a love affair? Perhaps not. But I held you in my arms and kissed you. And you forbade me—for what, my dear? For pity, you said once. And for love of your husband you said, too. Did you, then, love him when your throat stirred under my mouth and your blood taught your lips a madness they had not known?"

She could smile at him, and she made shift to turn her smile into a low laughter.

"You talk too well, my good David," she said. "Did you bid me here to recall a story two years old?"

She was disturbed and shaken. His indolent grace, which she had forgotten, stirred her afresh, and when he stood up and walked across the room her eyes dwelled on the lithe defiance of his

broad body. He was enormous, a swart giant, and adroit in his movements as a wild cat. But she had seen him stand immobile, the grace beaten out of him by the frightful effort that kept him there, rigid, his hands by his sides. If he had moved, she could have withstood him in nothing. He had neither moved nor touched her, and slowly, dragging out of the surf her swooning body, she had escaped into life.

After that, he had gone, and she had forgotten.

She had thought herself free, but she saw now that she had never been free; she had slept, and the sound of his voice, the touch of his hand in greeting, had been enough to wake her. Ecstasy waited again like wine at her closed lips. She could gulp it down, a madness to consume them both.

The eyelids flickered in her calm face. Looking at her, he saw nothing but her beauty, a serene, childlike beauty of quiet eyes and wide, fine-pointed mouth.

When he spoke she held herself a little aloof, hoarding her strength. It was easy to talk to him while he stayed at the other side of the room. His voice might thrust into her its intimate sweetness, but let him keep away and he would not know that she was faint for a remembered caress. He would go away—not to come back—and again she would escape from herself and from this violence lurking in her.

"The story is two years old," he said, "and yet it does not bore you."

"You are so sure of that," she murmured.

"I am not a fool."

He stopped in his even, silent pacing and faced her.

"My dear," he said mildly, "why do you keep me away, torturing both of us? When I left you—two years ago—I did not mean to come back. But you did not let me go. You kept me in your thoughts. They pursued me over half the world. Does that sound absurd

to you? I should have held it absurd—two years ago. But now I know it to be possible. Your thoughts disturbed me. They woke me at night, on ships in strange seas, and when I lay rolled in my blankets under the stars of my own country. If you didn't want me, why didn't you let me go?"

She drew a short, quick breath. "I did not know that I had so wanton a mind."

"You talked a deal," he said relentlessly, "of fair dealing for Richard. Is it fair to your husband to think on another man? Would Richard have thanked you for such fair dealing?"

Her widening eyes held him away. "Richard did not know."

"Do you suppose he never felt the loss? Did you think you could betray him in your thoughts and he not feel the bitterness of that treachery, as I felt its maddening allure? You know better than that. In so far as you let a power go out of you to hold me, you drew away from him, loosening your hold, thrusting him away. Don't you know it?"

Within a foot of her he halted abruptly, his whole will bent on the need to keep himself in that posture of false ease. If he touched her now he would crush her. The force pent up in him for two years would break into an uncontrollable raging. Surely she could hear the effort of his heart that made his breath a sword. He must keep still, while the strength ebbed out of him to touch her and returned upon him in a monstrous rhythm of joy and pain.

She did not understand. She even touched his arm in a gesture of entreaty. He found himself resenting her foolishness, that asked too much of him.

"Don't do that," he said harshly. "If you touch me, we shall both go up in flames."

She drew back at that, and he saw that she was afraid. The sight of her fear calmed him suddenly. He sat

down again, in front of her, and regarded curiously his own firm, short hands. They could have crushed her so easily, as easily as they might have caressed her.

"Are you afraid of me, Jane?" he said softly. "You need not be. I will be gentle with you always. You know it. I have only to touch you, and you would forget all this talk of pity and fair dealing. It would fall into nothing. But you see that I am not touching you. I am leaving you free, because it is your will that must answer me."

She was silent still, and he forgot her beauty in a sudden, breathless thought of what it would become at his touch.

"Why do you withhold yourself? For a word. For a dream."

"For a dream," she said. "Oh, David!"

She began to talk with a soft urgency. The effort of finding words for the emotions that stupefied her, helped, steadying her voice.

"For a dream," she repeated softly. "David, listen. It is indeed because of a dream. No new dream, my David, but one that was born when Richard and I met. We were young. I was eighteen when he married me, six years ago, and he two years older. We were in love: oh, more than that. We were love itself, the sharp, sweet love that comes once, and only to youth. Often it dies, but we cherished it and hid it warm in our hearts. We have grown so much into each other that we could not live apart. Richard is my girlhood, my faith in life, my very heart's joy. And I—why, I am in his heart, safe from any hurting thing. Oh, you don't know how safe! You call it a dream, but my life is rooted in it, with his. We shall go through life in its remembered sweetness. Do you think I could let myself spoil that?"

She was flushed and triumphant as

if she stood on the far side of perilous waters.

"You think like that," he said slowly. "And yet you have remembered me for two years. And now—yes, just now—you were mine."

She shook her head. "It is not I who desire you," she said painfully. "It is something in me that is fierce and greedy. I do not know what it is nor why your voice and the sight of you should rouse it. But I know that it is not good, as the dream is good."

"It is the real you," he said violently. "The other—bemused with dreams—is a girl. I do not want a girl. I want the woman that you are."

At the touch of his hands she closed her eyes. She made no effort to escape, but swayed against him. Only when he bent his mouth to hers the wide lids opened, and her face blazed with joy made visible.

He hesitated, dazed by the revelation, and in that instant her face changed.

With an adroit movement she slipped out of his arms and stood with hands outstretched to keep him off.

"David, let me go. We shouldn't be happy—you and I. No—don't deceive yourself and me. You would not keep faith with me."

"You talk as if faith were the only thing in the world." Destroying pain made speech difficult. Again he kept himself still. Above all, he must not frighten her, or she would lose her head.

"There might be other women," he got out at last. "I do not know. But they would be only women—and you would be my wife. Richard would make that easy for us."

"Ah, no!"

The cry that escaped her was his complete answer, but he dared not accept it.

"Jane!" he said. "My love, look at me! Do not fail me—and yourself—now. I can give you more than a

dream. I can give you a joy you never imagined, and the madness of life filled to the brim with living. Oh, you might be hurt, you might suffer, but at least you would be alive. You know that I love you. I shall love you until I die. I should not love others. No man can love two women at one time, though men have deluded themselves with that romantic notion. What one gets is stolen from tother."

There was one wide step between them, and he took it. He felt her flutter in his grasp. Her beauty filled him to the throat, so that he shuddered a little, unconscious that he held her with fierce hands that hurt.

He saw her face then, and let her go. She stood with hands at her throat.

He bent his head to catch her words. "It is nothing—or all. I must go. I was mad to come." Her dilated eyes did not falter before the flame of his. "There will be no thoughts, this time, to draw you across the world. I have got my freedom of you. Take yours of me."

She had to wait for his answer.

"And if there were, I should not come again," he said steadily. "There is a point beyond which passion ceases to endure—a man's passion, at any rate. You have pushed me to that point."

Jane hurried through the streets. She wanted swift movement to outstrip the scattering fury of her thoughts. When she reached her sister's house, she was glad to step from the sunlight into the vast, quiet room. Virginia was curled up on a couch. She lifted her pointed face and regarded Jane curiously.

"Well?" she said. Her wide eyes mocked Jane's gravity.

Jane laughed, and made no other answer.

"I suppose you have sent him away," Virginia observed. "You are a fool. He is worth ten of Richard."

Jane laughed again, softly.

"David goes to my head," she murmured. "But only when he is with me. He will not trouble my thoughts. That fire is burned out."

She was sorry for Virginia, whose husband bored her, as who would not be bored with that flat face and solemn dignity of paunch? Jane remembered Richard's smooth youth, and pity for Virginia rose to her lips as she touched them to Virginia's cheek.

Virginia sat up.

"You are a fool," she repeated softly. "But you are a dear fool. I will kill Richard if he hurts you."

"Richard will not hurt me in anything that matters."

Her happiness, naked and unashamed on her radiant face, woke the other's malice.

"I think you are too sure and too careful of Richard," she said deliberately. "Men do not like to have their faithfulness taken for granted: neither do they like to be petted and mothered overmuch. Their vanity suffers, and they sometimes take odd means to discover whether their faithfulness is indeed appreciated."

"You are bitter, my Virginia."

"I am awake. Men are mean. Oh, women are mean, too, but in other ways. Men have a nostalgia for the gutter, and most of them contrive to indulge it, at one time or another."

"Oh!" Jane said.

She did not say, "Not Richard," because she would not expose herself to Virginia's scorn, but her flickering smile betrayed her.

"Did you tell Richard why you were coming up to town?" her sister asked cruelly.

Jane flushed.

"No," she murmured. "But I shall tell him. It will be easy enough, now that it is over." She added defiantly: "There was nothing to tell."

David was right. Her thoughts, of

which she had been hardly aware, were a treachery. Richard had felt it. She recalled days and moods when she had not been able to touch him; in some fashion he had withdrawn from her. It was the subtlest of constraints, but it had existed, coming and going. Simple now, and very sweet, to wave it aside. She would cry a little, and implore Richard, "Do you indeed love me?"—and he would comfort her, looking at her with candid eyes that shamed her duplicity.

As the afternoon wore on, she grew restless and impatient. The madness that David had stirred swept through her when she thought of her husband. With a deliberate pleasure she called up the image of Richard's arms flung round her. She shivered, and her breath faltered in her throat.

She sought Virginia, standing before her with subdued defiance. "Virginia," she said, "I think I'd like to go home now, rather than wait till to-morrow."

Virginia hid her smile.

"But I was coming back with you," she observed. "Do I follow you?"

"No, come with me now," Jane said.

She had happiness enough to spare its crumbs for Virginia. Her joy in Richard would be the sharper that she must hide it from Virginia's cool eyes.

In the train she dreamed, her hand hiding her face from Virginia's candid mockery. Her happiness grew until she could scarcely breathe. It swelled in her throat, a secret, painful ecstasy. The years of marriage dropped away, and she was that girl who had gone gallantly, head up, to her young lover. She recalled the ways of that eager boy. He had liked to lie beside her in the long grass of the walled orchard. He said that it made him one with all the gay company of lovers who had enjoyed the star-pricked darkness, praying the night to be tardy that gave them soft lips, cool hands, and a tender being for benison.

Jane shut her lips on the joyous laughter that rose to them.

When they reached the little station the chauffeur said that Richard was away, and she stood still in the shock of disappointment. An abrupt consciousness of Virginia's sympathy steadied her to ask when he had gone.

"Yesterday," the man told her. "I drove him to catch the down train an hour after you left."

At that, violent relief mastered her. He had not followed her to London. During the short drive, she abandoned herself to a shamed unhappiness. The depth of her treachery frightened her.

"I wanted to tell him about David to-night," she said suddenly.

Virginia shrugged. "You are like the rest of us, my dear, for all your quaint simplicity. You revel in painful scenes."

But Virginia herself was pleased when Richard's wire commanded his car for the last train. She watched Jane with eyes that had forgotten their unhappy malice. Once she sighed, and said, sharply:

"Don't flaunt your joy in my face, Jane. You're hardly decent." But she smiled at her own words and came lazily to kiss the restless girl.

Jane wandered from her room to Richard's. She stood for a moment beside his bed, and then, opening a drawer, began foolishly to rearrange it. Richard hated to see her about his things, so that she indulged stealthily her need to do for him small personal services that no other woman might do.

When she came upon three letters tucked underneath a pile of garments she looked at them with puzzled interest, fingering them vaguely. Abruptly, a dizzy excitement thrust into her. Why was Richard keeping letters in that place? She smoothed out the sheets with a hand that shook, and as she read she grew very cold and a sick pain filled her so that she shivered,

swaying against the wall. The words of the letters became a meaningless chaos, from which phrases rose and stabbed her afresh: "Dearest, you know that I want you always when you come." And another: "I do understand that you love your wife, and I feel no jealousy of her. She is more beautiful than I am, and clever, and of your class, but I think I give you something that she does not—a madness, perhaps, that you had not imagined." And farther down the page, words that stirred the dull pain to an agony. The blood drove through her so that she could neither see nor hear. She thought that she cried out, but no sound came between her tortured lips.

There was nothing left then, nothing. All had been taken from her, to the last secret things. She stood naked, cowering under the lash of his hidden thoughts.

She was sick with shame, sick and reeling in a desolation more frightful than anything she had conceived.

He had done this to her, the grave, tender boy she had worshiped. She was beaten to the ground, humbled as none else could have so humbled her.

"Is it pride, then, that hurts like this?" Her lips parted in difficult speech.

"If it is pride, I am dying of it," she cried terribly.

Virginia's light step sounded outside the room, and Virginia's voice rose above the pain that blew round and through her like a wind. She gasped, and it snatched the breath from her mouth.

Virginia knocked. Jane pushed the letters into the drawer and walked across the room. "Come in," she said.

Virginia came in. Her glance flickered over Jane's face. It was white and remote and the eyes were empty.

"Something has happened to her," she thought, and her heart failed.

Jane's voice was level. "What did you want?" she asked.

Virginia lost her head at that thin sound. She tried to take Jane's hand, but the girl showed a quiet resentment.

"I've forgotten," Virginia stammered. "There was something I wanted."

"I'll come down with you," Jane said calmly.

They walked toward the door. Virginia, miserably conscious of her blunder, went quickly. At the door she turned. Jane was standing motionless in the middle of the room, her hands held stiffly by her side and her head flung back. She looked as if she were dying for want of air. A strange, rasping sound broke through her, tearing its way through her straining body. For a moment after Virginia reached her, she kept herself in that rigid vacancy, and then cry followed harsh cry, choking up through the lifted throat. Virginia held her, taking the violent shudders against herself, touching the blind, senseless thing with useless fingers. The sleeves of Jane's thin gown clung to her arms, wet with the sweat of anguish. Desperate and quiet, Virginia waited for minute after minute.

At last Jane lay still and spent in her sister's arms. Virginia spoke softly.

"Oh, don't, my dear, don't. It's not worth it. Men are all like that."

"You knew?"

"As soon as I saw you."

Jane drew back from the edge of that pity.

"You should not have been here," she said. "It makes things harder. Will you go now?"

When Virginia had gone, Jane opened the drawer and stood with the letters in her hand. Thoughts came and went, emptying their bitterness into her. So—he would have come to her to-night. She would have spread

her joy before his eyes that had but just looked on the other's joy of lifted face and shaken limbs. She covered her face, groaning in the travail of her shame.

Richard would be sorry for her wretchedness.

How should she tell him, then?

"Your love-making lacks originality," she would say, and laugh a little, holding out the fatal page. Desolation swept down upon her at the sound of her voice repeating the malicious words.

She had not caught the sounds of his arrival, but she heard his footsteps now in the corridor. He stood in the doorway, and her eyes turned aside, seeing even in that ebb of her forces the charm of his faun's mouth and wide, lifted brow. Her lips moved soundlessly in the phrases she had prepared, but from her dry throat came only a cracked murmur.

"It is all spoiled," she said, and fell into hopeless weeping, while he stood looking from her face to the letter in her hand.



CERTAIN FRAGMENTS FROM THE ARABIC

I.

THE myrtles of Damascus, when they smile,
Exalt my soul to some remote, high place—
But, oh, thy face!

Roses of Bagdad, bathed in moonlight dew,
Make my heart drunk when all their joy it sips—
But, oh, thy lips!

II.

O form to which the palms have lent their grace,
And all the jasmines given their perfume,
What lovelier form goes wandering through earth's room?

O eyes to which the diamond lends its light,
And night its radiant stars,
What woman's eyes give forth a fire more bright?

O kiss more sweet than honey from her mouth,
What woman's kiss is fresher from the south?

Oh, to caress thy hair! To feel my flesh
Thrill against thine! Then to gaze in thine eyes,
And see the stars arise!

Charles Hanson Towne.

Marion
A Romance of the French School
By
Artemus Ward

ON the sad seashore! Always to hear the moaning of those dismal waves!

Listen! I will tell you my story—my story of love, of misery, of black despair.

I am a moral Frenchman.

She whom I adore, whom I adore still, is the wife of a fat marquis—a lop-eared, bear-eyed, greasy marquis. A man without a soul. A man without sentiment, who cares naught for moonlight and music. A low, practical man who pays his debts. I hate him.

II.

She, my soul's delight, my empress, my angel, is superbly beautiful.

I loved her at first sight—devotedly, madly.

She dashed past me in her coupé. I saw her but a moment—perhaps only an instant—but she took me captive then and there, forevermore.

Forevermore!

I followed her, after that, wherever she went. At length she came to notice, to smile upon me. My motto was *en avant!* That is a French word. I got it out of the back of Worcester's Dictionary.

III.

She wrote me that I might come to see her at her own house. Oh, joy, joy unutterable, to see her at her own house!

I went to see her after nightfall, in the soft moonlight.

She came down the graveled walk to meet me, on this beautiful midsummer night—came to me in pure white, her golden hair in splendid disorder—strangely beautiful, yet in tears!

She told me her fresh grievances.

The marquis, always a despot, had latterly misused her most vilely.

That very morning, at breakfast, he had cursed the fishballs and sneered at the pickled onions.

She is a good cook. The neighbors will tell you so. And to be told by the base marquis—a man who, previous to his marriage, had lived at cheap eating houses—to be told by him that her manner of frying fishballs was a failure—it was too much.

Her tears fell fast. I too wept. I mixed my sobs with hers.

"Fly with me!" I cried.

Her lips met mine. I held her in my arms. I felt her breath upon my cheek. It was Hunkey.

"Fly with me! To New York! I will write romances for the Sunday

papers—real French romances with morals to them. My style will be appreciated. Shopgirls and young mercantile persons will adore it, and I will amass wealth with my ready pen."

Ere she could reply—ere she could articulate her ecstasy, her husband, the marquis, crept snakelike upon me.

How shall I write it? He kicked me out of the garden—he kicked me into the street.

I did not return. How could I? I, so ethereal, so full of soul, of sentiment, of sparkling originality! He so gross, so practical, so lop-eared!

Had I returned, the creature would have kicked me again.

So I left Paris for this place—this place so lonely, so dismal.

Ah, me!

Oh, dear!



RONDEL

KISSING her hair, I sat against her feet,
 Wove and unwound it, wound and found it sweet;
 Made fast therewith her hands, drew down her eyes,
 Deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim skies;
 With her own tresses bound and found her fair,
 Kissing her hair.

Sleep were no sweeter than her face to me,
 Sleep of cold sea bloom under the cold sea;
 What pain could get between my face and hers?
 What new sweet thing would love not relish worse?
 Unless, perhaps, white death had kissed me there,
 Kissing her hair.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

by
O. Henry

Author of

*The Voice
of the City*



Blind Man's Holiday

ALAS for the man and for the artist with the shifting point of perspective! Life shall be a confusion of ways to the one; the landscape shall rise up and confound the other. Take the case of Lorison. At one time he appeared to himself to be the feeblest of fools; at another he conceived that he followed ideals so fine that the world was not yet ready to accept them. During one mood he cursed his folly; possessed by the other, he bore himself with a serene grandeur akin to greatness: in neither did he attain the perspective.

Generations before, the name had been "Larsen." His race had bequeathed him its fine-strung, melancholy temperament, its saving balance of thrift and industry.

From his point of perspective he saw himself an outcast from society, forever to be a shady skulker along the ragged edge of respectability; a denizen *des trois-quarts de monde*, that pathetic

spheroid lying between the *haut* and the *demi*, whose inhabitants envy each of their neighbors, and are scorned by both. He was self-condemned to this opinion, as he was self-exiled, through it, to this quaint Southern city a thousand miles from his former home. Here he had dwelt for longer than a year, knowing but few, keeping in a subjective world of shadows which was invaded at times by the perplexing bulks of jarring realities. Then he fell in love with a girl whom he met in a cheap restaurant, and his story begins.

The Rue Chartres, in New Orleans, is a street of ghosts. It lies in the quarter where the Frenchman, in his prime, set up his translated pride and glory; where, also, the arrogant don had swaggered, and dreamed of gold and grants and ladies' gloves. Every flagstone has its grooves worn by footsteps going royally to the wooing and the fighting. Every house has a princely heartbreak;

each doorway its untold tale of gallant promise and slow decay.

By night the Rue Chartres is now but a murky fissure, from which the groping wayfarer sees, flung against the sky, the tangled filigree of Moorish iron balconies. The old houses of monsieur stand yet, indomitable against the century, but their essence is gone. The street is one of ghosts to whosoever can see them.

A faint heartbeat of the street's ancient glory still survives in a corner occupied by the Café Carabine d'Or. Once men gathered there to plot against kings, and to warn presidents. They do so yet, but they are not the same kind of men. A brass button will scatter these; those would have set their faces against an army. Above the door hangs the signboard, upon which has been depicted a vast animal of unfamiliar species. In the act of firing upon this monster is represented an unobtrusive human leveling an obtrusive gun, once the color of bright gold. Now the legend above the picture is faded beyond conjecture; the gun's relation to the title is a matter of faith; the menaced animal, wearied of the long aim of the hunter, has resolved itself into a shapeless blot.

The place is known as "Antonio's," as the name, white upon the red-lit transparency, and gilt upon the windows, attests. There is a promise in Antonio; a justifiable expectancy of savory things in oil and pepper and wine, and perhaps an angel's whisper of garlic. But the rest of the name is "O'Riley." Antonio O'Riley!

The Carabine d'Or is an ignominious ghost of the Rue Chartres. The café where Bienville and Conti dined, where a prince has broken bread, is become a "family restaurant."

Its customers are working men and women, almost to a unit. Occasionally you will see chorus girls from the cheaper theaters, and men who follow

avocations subject to quick vicissitudes; but at Antonio's—name rich in bohemian promise, but tame in fulfillment—manners debonair and gay are toned down to the "family" standard. Should you light a cigarette, mine host will touch you on the "arrum" and remind you that the proprieties are menaced. Antonio entices and beguiles from fiery legend without, but O'Riley teaches decorum within.

It was at this restaurant that Lorison first saw the girl. A flashy fellow with a predatory eye had followed her in, and had advanced to take the other chair at the little table where she stopped, but Lorison slipped into the seat before him. Their acquaintance began, and grew, and now for two months they had sat at the same table each evening, not meeting by appointment, but as if by a series of fortuitous and happy accidents. After dining, they would take a walk together in one of the little city parks, or among the panoramic markets where exhibits a continuous vaudeville of sights and sounds. Always at eight o'clock their steps led them to a certain street corner, where she prettily but firmly bade him good night and left him. "I do not live far from here," she frequently said, "and you must let me go the rest of the way alone."

But now Lorison had discovered that he wanted to go the rest of the way with her, or happiness would depart, leaving him on a very lonely corner of life. And at the same time that he made the discovery, the secret of his banishment from the society of the good laid its finger in his face and told him it must not be.

Man is too thoroughly an egoist not to be also an egotist; if he love, the object shall know it. During a lifetime he may conceal it through stress of expediency and honor, but it shall bubble from his dying lips, though it disrupt a neighborhood. It is known, however, that

most men do not wait so long to disclose their passion. In the case of Lorison, his particular ethics positively forbade him to declare his sentiments, but he must needs dally with the subject, and woo by innuendo at least.

On this night, after the usual meal at the Carabine d'Or, he strolled, with his companion, down the dim old street toward the river.

The Rue Chartres perished in the old Place d'Armes. The ancient Cabildo, where Spanish justice fell like hail, faces it, and the Cathedral, another provincial ghost, overlooks it. Its center is a little, iron-railed park of flowers and immaculate graveled walks, where citizens take the air of evenings. Pedestaled high above it, the general sits his cavorting steed, with his face turned stonily down the river toward English Turn, whence come no more Britons to bombard his cotton bales.

Often the two sat in this square, but to-night Lorison guided her past the stone-stepped gate, and still riverward. As they walked, he smiled to himself to think that all he knew of her—except that he loved her—was her name, Norah Greenway, and that she lived with her brother. They had talked about everything except themselves. Perhaps her reticence had been caused by his.

They came, at length, upon the levee, and sat upon a great, prostrate beam. The air was pungent with the dust of commerce. The great river slipped yellowly past. Across it Algiers lay, a longitudinal black bulk against a vibrant electric haze sprinkled with exact stars.

The girl was young and of the piquant order. A certain bright melancholy pervaded her; she possessed an untarnished, pale prettiness doomed to please. Her voice, when she spoke, dwarfed her theme. It was the voice capable of investing little subjects with a large interest. She sat at ease, bestowing her skirts with the little

womanly touch, serene, as if the begrimed pier were a summer garden. Lorison poked the rotting boards with his cane.

He began by telling her that he was in love with some one to whom he durst not speak of it. "And why not?" she asked, accepting swiftly his fatuous presentation of a third person of straw. "My place in the world," he answered, "is none to ask a woman to share. I am an outcast from honest people; I am wrongly accused of one crime, and I am, I believe, guilty of another."

Thence he plunged into the story of his abdication from society. The story, pruned of his moral philosophy, deserves no more than the slightest touch. It is no new tale, that of the gambler's declension. During one night's sitting he lost, and then had imperiled a certain amount of his employer's money, which, by accident, he carried with him. He continued to lose, to the last wager, and then began to gain, leaving the game winner to a somewhat formidable sum. The same night his employer's safe was robbed. A search was had; the winnings of Lorison were found in his room, their total forming an accusative nearness to the sum purloined. He was taken, tried and, through incomplete evidence, released, smutched with the sinister *devoirs* of a disagreeing jury.

"It is not in the unjust accusation," he said to the girl, "that my burden lies, but in the knowledge that from the moment I staked the first dollar of the firm's money I was a criminal—no matter whether I lost or won. You see why it is impossible for me to speak of love to her."

"It is a sad thing," said Norah, after a little pause, "to think what very good people there are in the world."

"Good?" said Lorison.

"I was thinking of this superior person whom you say you love. She must be a very poor sort of creature."

"I do not understand."

"Nearly," she continued, "as poor a sort of creature as yourself."

"You do not understand," said Lorison, removing his hat and sweeping back his fine, light hair. "Suppose she loved me in return, and were willing to marry me. Think, if you can, what would follow. Never a day would pass but she would be reminded of her sacrifice. I would read a condescension in her smile, a pity even in her affection, that would madden me. No. The thing would stand between us forever. Only equals should mate. I could never ask her to come down upon my lower plane."

An arc light faintly shone upon Lorison's face. An illumination from within also pervaded it. The girl saw the rapt, ascetic look; it was the face either of Sir Galahad or Sir Fool.

"Quite starlike," she said, "is this unapproachable angel. Really too high to be grasped."

"By me, yes."

She faced him suddenly. "My dear friend, would you prefer your star fallen?" Lorison made a wide gesture.

"You push me to the bald fact," he declared; "you are not in sympathy with my argument. But I will answer you so. If I could reach my particular star, to drag it down, I would not do it; but if it were fallen, I would pick it up, and thank Heaven for the privilege."

They were silent for some minutes. Norah shivered, and thrust her hands deep into the pockets of her jacket. Lorison uttered a remorseful exclamation.

"I'm not cold," she said. "I was just thinking. I ought to tell you something. You have selected a strange confidante. But you cannot expect a chance acquaintance, picked up in a doubtful restaurant, to be an angel."

"Norah!" cried Lorison.

"Let me go on. You have told me

about yourself. We have been such good friends. I must tell you now what I never wanted you to know. I am—worse than you are. I was on the stage. I sang in the chorus. I was pretty bad, I guess. I stole diamonds from the prima donna—they arrested me. I gave most of them up, and they let me go. I drank wine every night—a great deal. I was very wicked, but——"

Lorison knelt quickly by her side and took her hands.

"Dear Norah!" he said, exultantly. "It is you, it is you I love! You never guessed it, did you? 'Tis you I meant all the time. Now I can speak. Let me make you forget the past. We have both suffered; let us shut out the world, and live for each other. Norah, do you hear me say I love you?"

"In spite of——"

"Rather say because of it. You have come out of your past noble and good. Your heart is an angel's. Give it to me."

"A little while ago you feared the future too much to even speak."

"But for you; not for myself. Can you love me?"

She cast herself, wildly sobbing, upon his breast.

"Better than life—than truth itself—than everything."

"And my own past," said Lorison, with a note of solicitude; "can you forgive and——"

"I answered you that," she whispered, "when I told you I loved you." She leaned away, and looked thoughtfully at him. "If I had not told you about myself, would you have—would you——"

"No," he interrupted; "I would never have let you know I loved you. I would never have asked you this—Norah, will you be my wife?"

She wept again.

"Oh, believe me; I am good now—I am no longer wicked! I will be the

best wife in the world. Don't think I am—bad any more. If you do I shall die, I shall die!"

While he was consoling her, she brightened up, eager and impetuous. "Will you marry me to-night?" she said. "Will you prove it that way? I have a reason for wishing it to be to-night. Will you?"

Of one of two things was this exceeding frankness the outcome: either of importunate brazenness or of utter innocence. The lover's perspective contained only the one.

"The sooner," said Lorison, "the happier I shall be."

"What is there to do?" she asked. "What do you have to get? Come! You should know."

Her energy stirred the dreamer to action.

"A city directory first," he cried, gayly, "to find where the man lives who gives licenses to happiness. We will go together and rout him out. Cabs, cars, policemen, telephones and ministers shall aid us."

"Father Rogan shall marry us," said the girl with ardor. "I will take you to him."

An hour later the two stood at the open doorway of an immense, gloomy brick building in a narrow and lonely street. The license was tight in Norah's hand.

"Wait here a moment," she said, "till I find Father Rogan."

She plunged into the black hallway, and the lover was left standing, as it were, on one leg, outside. His impatience was not greatly taxed. Gazing curiously into what seemed the hallway to Erebus, he was presently reassured by a stream of light that bisected the darkness, far adown the passage. Then he heard her call, and fluttered lampward, like the moth. She beckoned him through a doorway into the room whence emanated the light. The room

was bare of nearly everything except books, which had subjugated all its space. Here and there little spots of territory had been reconquered. An elderly, bald man, with a superlatively calm, remote eye, stood by a table with a book in his hand, his finger still marking a page. His dress was somber and appertained to a religious order. His eye denoted an acquaintance with the perspective.

"Father Rogan," said Norah, "this is he."

"The two of ye," said Father Rogan, "want to get married?"

They did not deny it. He married them. The ceremony was quickly done. One who could have witnessed it, and felt its scope, might have trembled at the terrible inadequacy of it to rise to the dignity of its endless chain of results.

Afterward the priest spake briefly, as if by rote, of certain other civil and legal addenda that either might or should, at a later time, cap the ceremony. Lorison tendered a fee, which was declined, and before the door closed after the departing couple Father Rogan's book popped open again where his finger marked it.

In the dark hall Norah whirled and clung to her companion, tearful.

"Will you never, never be sorry?"

At last she was reassured.

At the first light they reached upon the street, she asked the time, just as she had each night. Lorison looked at his watch. Half past eight.

Lorison thought it was from habit that she guided their steps toward the corner where they always parted. But, arrived there, she hesitated, and then released his arm. A drug store stood on the corner; its bright, soft light shone upon them.

"Please leave me here as usual to-night," said Norah, sweetly. "I must—I would rather you would. You will not object? At six to-morrow eve-

ning I will meet you at Antonio's. I want to sit with you there once more. And then—I will go where you say." She gave him a bewildering, bright smile, and walked swiftly away.

Surely it needed all the strength of her charm to carry off this astounding behavior. It was no discredit to Lorison's strength of mind that his head began to whirl. Pocketing his hands, he rambled vacuously over to the druggist's windows, and began assiduously to spell over the names of the patent medicines therein displayed.

As soon as he had recovered his wits, he proceeded along the street in an aimless fashion. After drifting for two or three squares, he flowed into a somewhat more pretentious thoroughfare, a way much frequented by him in his solitary ramblings. For here was a row of shops devoted to traffic in goods of the widest range of choice—handiworks of art, skill and fancy, products of nature and labor from every zone.

Here, for a time, he loitered among the conspicuous windows, where was set, emphasized by congested floods of light, the cunningest spoil of the interiors. There were few passers, and of this Lorison was glad. He was not of the world. For a long time he had touched his fellow man only at the gear of a leveled cogwheel—at right angles, and upon a different axis. He had dropped into a distinctly new orbit. The stroke of ill fortune had acted upon him, in effect, as a blow delivered upon the apex of a certain ingenious toy, the musical top, which, when thus buffeted while spinning, gives forth, with scarcely retarded motion, a complete change of key and chord.

Strolling along the pacific avenue, he experienced a singular, supernatural calm, accompanied by an unusual activity of brain. Reflecting upon recent affairs, he assured himself of his happiness in having won for a bride the one he had so greatly desired, yet he

wondered mildly at his dearth of active emotion. Her strange behavior in abandoning him without valid excuse on his bridal eve aroused in him only a vague and curious speculation. Again, he found himself contemplating, with complaisant serenity, the incidents of her somewhat lively career. His perspective seemed to have been queerly shifted.

As he stood before a window near a corner, his ears were assailed by a waxing clamor and commotion. He stood close to the window to allow passage to the cause of the hubbub—a procession of human beings, which rounded the corner and headed in his direction. He perceived a salient hue of blue and a glitter of brass about a central figure of dazzling white and silver, and a ragged wake of black, bobbing figures.

Two ponderous policemen were conducting between them a woman dressed as if for the stage, in a short, white, satiny skirt reaching to the knees, pink stockings, and a sort of sleeveless bodice bright with relucant, armorlike scales. Upon her curly, light hair was perched, at a rollicking angle, a shining tin helmet. The costume was to be instantly recognized as one of those amazing conceptions to which competition has harried the inventors of the spectacular ballet. One of the officers bore a long cloak upon his arm, which, doubtless, had been intended to veil the candid attractions of their effulgent prisoner, but, for some reason, it had not been called into use, to the vociferous delight of the tail of the procession.

Compelled by a sudden and vigorous movement of the woman, the parade halted before the window by which Lorison stood. He saw that she was young, and, at the first glance, was deceived by a sophistical prettiness of her face, which waned before a more judicious scrutiny. Her look was bold and reckless, and upon her countenance,

where yet the contours of youth survived, were the finger marks of old age's credentialled courier, Late Hours.

The young woman fixed her unshrinking gaze upon Lorison, and called to him in the voice of the wronged heroine in straits:

"Say! You look like a good fellow; come and put up the bail, won't you? I've done nothing to get pinched for. It's all a mistake. See how they're treating me! You won't be sorry, if you'll help me out of this. Think of your sister or your girl being dragged along the streets this way! I say, come along, now, like a good fellow."

It may be that Lorison, in spite of the unconvincing bathos of this appeal, showed a sympathetic face, for one of the officers left the woman's side, and went over to him.

"It's all right, sir," he said, in a husky, confidential tone; "she's the right party. We took her after the first act at the Green Light Theater, on a wire from the chief of police of Chicago. It's only a square or two to the station. Her rig's pretty bad, but she refused to change clothes—or, rather," added the officer, with a smile, "to put on some. I thought I'd explain matters to you so you wouldn't think she was being imposed upon."

"What is the charge?" asked Lorison.

"Grand larceny. Diamonds. Her husband is a jeweler in Chicago. She cleaned his show case of the sparklers, and skipped with a comic-opera troupe."

The policeman, perceiving that the interest of the entire group of spectators was centered upon himself and Lorison—their conference being regarded as a possible new complication—was fain to prolong the situation—which reflected his own importance—by a little afterpiece of philosophical comment.

"A gentleman like you, sir," he went

on, affably, "would never notice it, but it comes in my line to observe what an immense amount of trouble is made by that combination—I mean the stage, diamonds and light-headed women who aren't satisfied with good homes. I tell you, sir, a man these days and nights wants to know what his womenfolks are up to."

The policeman smiled a good night, and returned to the side of his charge, who had been intently watching Lorison's face during the conversation, no doubt for some indication of his intention to render succor. Now, at the failure of the sign, and at the movement made to continue the ignominious progress, she abandoned hope, and addressed him thus, pointedly:

"You damn chalk-faced quitter! You was thinking of giving me a hand, but you let the cop talk you out of it the first word. You're a dandy to tie to. Say, if you ever get a girl, she'll have a picnic. Won't she work you to the queen's taste! Oh, my!" She concluded with a taunting, shrill laugh that rasped Lorison like a saw. The policemen urged her forward; the delighted train of gaping followers closed up the rear; and the captive Amazon, accepting her fate, extended the scope of her maledictions so that none in hearing might seem to be slighted.

Then there came upon Lorison an overwhelming revulsion of his perspective. It may be that he had been ripe for it, that the abnormal condition of mind in which he had for so long existed was already about to revert to its balance; however, it is certain that the events of the last few minutes had furnished the channel, if not the impetus, for the change.

The initial determining influence had been so small a thing as the fact and manner of his having been approached by the officer. That agent had, by the style of his accost, restored the loiterer to his former place in society. In an

instant he had been transformed from a somewhat rancid prowler along the fishy side streets of gentility into an honest gentleman, with whom even so lordly a guardian of the peace might agreeably exchange the compliments.

This, then, first broke the spell, and set thrilling in him a resurrected longing for the fellowship of his kind, and the rewards of the virtuous. To what end, he vehemently asked himself, was this fanciful self-accusation, this empty renunciation, this moral squeamishness through which he had been led to abandon what was his heritage in life, and not beyond his deserts? Technically, he was uncondemned; his sole guilty spot was in thought rather than deed, and cognizance of it unshared by others. For what good, moral or sentimental, did he slink, retreating like the hedgehog from his own shadow, to and fro in this musty bohemia that lacked even the picturesque?

But the thing that struck home and set him raging was the part played by the Amazonian prisoner. To the counterpart of that astounding belligerent—identical, at least, in the way of experience—to one, by her own confession, thus far fallen, had he, not three hours since, been united in marriage. How desirable and natural it had seemed to him then, and how monstrous it seemed now! How the words of diamond thief number two yet burned in his ears: "If you ever get a girl, she'll have a picnic." What did that mean but that women instinctively knew him for one they could hoodwink? Still again, there reverberated the policeman's sapient contribution to his agony: "A man these days and nights wants to know what his womenfolks are up to." Oh, yes, he had been a fool; he had looked at things from the wrong standpoint.

But the wildest note in all the clamor was struck by pain's forefinger, jealousy. Now, at least, he felt that keenest sting—a mounting love unworthily

bestowed. Whatever she might be, he loved her; he bore in his own breast his doom. A grating, comic flavor to his predicament struck him suddenly, and he laughed creakingly as he swung down the echoing pavement. An impetuous desire to act, to battle with his fate, seized him. He stopped upon his heel, and smote his palms together triumphantly. His wife was—where? But there was a tangible link; an outlet more or less navigable, through which his derelict ship of matrimony might yet be safely towed—the priest!

Like all imaginative men with pliable natures, Lorison was, when thoroughly stirred, apt to become tempestuous. With a high and stubborn indignation upon him, he retraced his steps to the intersecting street by which he had come. Down this he hurried to the corner where he had parted with—an astringent grimace tintured the thought—his wife. Thence still back he harked, following through an unfamiliar district his stimulated recollections of the way they had come from that preposterous wedding. Many times he went abroad, and nosed his way back to the trail, furious.

At last, when he reached the dark, calamitous building in which his madness had culminated, and found the black hallway, he dashed down it, perceiving no light or sound. But he raised his voice, hailing loudly; reckless of everything but that he should find the old mischiefmaker with the eyes that looked too far away to see the disaster he had wrought. The door opened, and in the stream of light Father Rogan stood, his book in hand, with his finger marking the place.

"Ah!" cried Lorison. "You are the man I want. I had a wife of you a few hours ago. I would not trouble you, but I neglected to note how it was done. Will you oblige me with the information whether the business is beyond remedy?"

"Come inside," said the priest; "there are other lodgers in the house, who might prefer sleep to even a gratified curiosity."

Lorison entered the room and took the chair offered him. The priest's eyes looked a courteous interrogation.

"I must apologize again," said the young man, "for so soon intruding upon you with my marital infelicities, but, as my wife has neglected to furnish me with her address, I am deprived of the legitimate recourse of a family row."

"I am quite a plain man," said Father Rogan, pleasantly; "but I do not see how I am to ask you questions."

"Pardon my indirectness," said Lorison; "I will ask one. In this room to-night you pronounced me to be a husband. You afterward spoke of additional rites or performances that either should or could be effected. I paid little attention to your words then, but I am hungry to hear them repeated now. As matters stand, am I married past all help?"

"You are as legally and as firmly bound," said the priest, "as though it had been done in a cathedral, in the presence of thousands. The additional observances I referred to are not necessary to the strictest legality of the act, but were advised as a precaution for the future—for convenience of proof in such contingencies as wills, inheritances and the like."

Lorison laughed harshly.

"Many thanks," he said. "Then there is no mistake, and I am the happy benedict. I suppose I should go stand upon the bridal corner, and when my wife gets through walking the streets she will look me up."

Father Rogan regarded him calmly.

"My son," he said, "when a man and woman come to me to be married I always marry them. I do this for the sake of other people whom they might go away and marry if they did not mar-

ry each other. As you see, I do not seek your confidence; but your case seems to me to be one not altogether devoid of interest. Very few marriages that have come to my notice have brought such well-expressed regret within so short a time. I will hazard one question: were you not under the impression that you loved the lady you married, at the time you did so?"

"Loved her!" cried Lorison, wildly. "Never so well as now, though she told me she deceived and sinned and stole. Never more than now, when, perhaps, she is laughing at the fool she cajoled and left, with scarcely a word, to return to God only knows what particular line of her former folly."

Father Rogan answered nothing. During the silence that succeeded, he sat with a quiet expectation beaming in his full, lambent eye.

"If you would listen——" began Lorison. The priest held up his hand.

"As I hoped," he said. "I thought you would trust me. Wait but a moment." He brought a long clay pipe, filled and lighted it.

"Now, my son," he said.

Lorison poured a twelvemonth's accumulate confidence into Father Rogan's ear. He told all; not sparing himself or omitting the facts of his past, the events of the night, or his disturbing conjectures and fears.

"The main point," said the priest, when he had concluded, "seems to me to be this—are you reasonably sure that you love this woman whom you have married?"

"Why," exclaimed Lorison, rising impulsively to his feet, "why should I deny it? But look at me—am I fish, flesh or fowl? That is the main point to me, I assure you."

"I understand you," said the priest, also rising, and laying down his pipe. "The situation is one that has taxed the endurance of much older men than you—in fact, especially much older men

than you. I will try to relieve you from it, and this night. You shall see for yourself into exactly what predicament you have fallen, and how you shall, possibly, be extricated. There is no evidence so credible as that of the eyesight."

Father Rogan moved about the room, and donned a soft black hat. Buttoning his coat to his throat, he laid his hand on the doorknob. "Let us walk," he said.

The two went out upon the street. The priest turned his face down it, and Lorison walked with him through a squalid district, where the houses loomed, awry and desolate looking, high above them. Presently they turned into a less dismal side street, where the houses were smaller, and, though hinting of the most meager comfort, lacked the concentrated wretchedness of the more populous by-ways.

At a segregated, two-story house Father Rogan halted, and mounted the steps with the confidence of a familiar visitor. He ushered Lorison into a narrow hallway, faintly lighted by a cobwebbed hanging lamp. Almost immediately a door to the right opened and a dingy Irishwoman protruded her head.

"Good evening to ye, Mistress Geehan," said the priest, unconsciously, it seemed, falling into a delicately flavored brogue. "And is it yourself can tell me if Norah has gone out again, the night, maybe?"

"Oh, it's yer blessed riverence! Sure and I can tell ye the same. The purty darlin' wint out, as usual, but a bit later. And she says: 'Mother Geehan,' says she, 'it's me last noight out, praise the saints, this noight is!' And, oh, yer riverence, the swate, beautiful drame of a dress she had this toime! White satin and silk and ribbons, and lace about the neck and arrums—'twas a sin, yer riverence, the gold was spint upon it."

The priest heard Lorison catch his breath painfully, and a faint smile flickered across his own clean-cut mouth.

"Well, then, Mistress Geehan," said he, "I'll just step upstairs and see the bit boy for a minute, and I'll take this gentleman up with me."

"He's awake, thin," said the woman. "I've just come down from sitting wid him the last hour, tilling him fine shtories of ould County Tyrone. 'Tis a greedy gossoon, it is, yer riverence, for me shtories."

"Small the doubt," said Father Rogan. "There's no rocking would put him to slape the quicker, I'm thinking."

Amid the woman's shrill protest against the retort, the two men ascended the steep stairway. The priest pushed open the door of a room near its top.

"Is that you already, sister?" drawled a sweet, childish voice from the darkness.

"It's only ould Father Denny come to see ye, darlin'; and a foine gentleman I've brought to make ye a gr-r-rand call. And ye resaves us fast aslape in bed! Shame on yez manners!"

"Oh, Father Denny, is that you? I'm glad. And will you light the lamp, please? It's on the table by the door. And quit talking like Mother Geehan, Father Denny."

The priest lit the lamp, and Lorison saw a tiny, towlsled-haired boy, with a thin, delicate face, sitting up in a small bed in a corner. Quickly, also, his rapid glance considered the room and its contents. It was furnished with more than comfort, and its adornments plainly indicated a woman's discerning taste. An open door beyond revealed the blackness of an adjoining room's interior.

The boy clutched both of Father Rogan's hands. "I'm so glad you came," he said; "but why did you come in the night? Did sister send you?"

"Off wid ye! Am I to be sint about, at me age, as was Terence McShane, of Ballymahone? I came on me own r-r-responsibility."

Lorison had also advanced to the boy's bedside. He was fond of children; and the wee fellow, laying himself down to sleep alone in that dark room, stirred his heart.

"Aren't you afraid, little man?" he asked, stooping down beside him.

"Sometimes," answered the boy, with a shy smile, "when the rats make too much noise. But nearly every night, when sister goes out, Mother Geehan stays a while with me, and tells me funny stories. I'm not often afraid, sir."

"This brave little gentleman," said Father Rogan, "is a scholar of mine. Every day from half past six to half past eight—when sister comes for him—he stops in my study, and we find out what's in the inside of books. He knows multiplication, division and fractions; and he's troubling me to begin wid the chronicles of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, Corurac McCullenan and Cuan O'Lochain, the gr-r-reat Irish historians." The boy was evidently accustomed to the priest's Celtic pleasantries. A little, appreciative grin was all the attention the insinuation of pedantry received.

Lorison, to have saved his life, could not have put to the child one of those vital questions that were wildly beating about, unanswered, in his own brain. The little fellow was very like Norah; he had the same shining hair and candid eyes.

"Oh, Father Denny," cried the boy, suddenly, "I forgot to tell you! Sister is not going away at night any more! She told me so when she kissed me good night as she was leaving. And she said she was so happy, and then she cried. Wasn't that queer? But I'm glad, aren't you?"

"Yes, lad. And now, ye omadhaun,

go to sleep, and say good night; we must be going."

"Which shall I do first, Father Denny?"

"Faith, he's caught me again! Wait till I get the sassenach into the annals of Tageruach, the hagiographer; I'll give him enough of the Irish idiom to make him more respectful."

The light was out, and the small, brave voice bidding them good night from the dark room. They groped downstairs, and tore away from the garrulity of Mother Geehan.

Again the priest steered them through the dim ways, but this time in another direction. His conductor was serenely silent, and Lorison followed his example to the extent of seldom speaking. Serene he could not be. His heart beat suffocatingly in his breast. The following of this blind, menacing trail was pregnant with he knew not what humiliating revelation to be delivered at its end.

They came into a more pretentious street, where trade, it could be surmised, flourished by day. And again the priest paused; this time before a lofty building, whose great doors and windows in the lowest floor were carefully shuttered and barred. Its higher apertures were dark, save in the third story, the windows of which were brilliantly lighted. Lorison's ear caught a distant, regular, pleasing thrumming, as of music above. They stood at an angle of the building. Up, along the side nearest them, mounted an iron stairway. At its top was an upright, illuminated parallelogram. Father Rogan had stopped, and stood, musing.

"I will say this much," he remarked, thoughtfully: "I believe you to be a better man than you think yourself to be, and a better man than I thought some hours ago. But do not take this," he added, with a smile, "as much praise. I promised you a possible deliverance from an unhappy perplexity. I will

have to modify that promise. I can only remove the mystery that enhanced that perplexity. Your deliverance depends upon yourself. Come."

He led his companion up the stairway. Halfway up, Lorison caught him by the sleeve. "Remember," he gasped, "I love that woman."

"You desired to know."

"I—— Go on."

The priest reached the landing at the top of the stairway. Lorison, behind him, saw that the illuminated space was the glass upper half of a door opening into the lighted room. The rhythmic music increased as they neared it; the stairs shook with the mellow vibrations.

Lorison stopped breathing when he set foot upon the highest step, for the priest stood aside, and motioned him to look through the glass of the door.

His eyes, accustomed to the darkness, met first a blinding glare, and then he made out the faces and forms of many people, amid an extravagant display of splendid robings—billowy laces, brilliant-hued finery, ribbons, silks and misty drapery. And then he caught the meaning of that jarring hum, and he saw the tired, pale, happy face of his wife, bending, as were a score of others, over her sewing machine—toiling, toiling. Here was the folly she pursued, and the end of his quest.

But not his deliverance, though even then remorse struck him. His shamed soul fluttered once more before it retired to make room for the other and better one. For, to temper his thrill of joy, the shine of the satin and the glimmer of ornaments recalled the disturbing figure of the bespangled Amazon, and the base duplicate histories lit by the glare of footlights and stolen diamonds. It is past the wisdom of him who only sets the scenes, either to praise or blame the man. But this time his love overcame his scruples. He took a quick step, and reached out his hand for the doorknob. Father Rogan

was quicker to arrest it and draw him back.

"You use my trust in you queerly," said the priest sternly. "What are you about to do?"

"I am going to my wife," said Lorison. "Let me pass."

"Listen," said the priest, holding him firmly by the arm. "I am about to put you in possession of a piece of knowledge of which, thus far, you have scarcely proved deserving. I do not think you ever will; but I will not dwell upon that. You see in that room the woman you married, working for a frugal living for herself, and a generous comfort for an idolized brother. This building belongs to the chief costumer of the city. For months the advance orders for the coming Mardi Gras festivals have kept the work going day and night. I myself secured employment here for Norah. She toils here each night from nine o'clock until daylight, and, besides, carries home with her some of the finer costumes requiring more delicate needlework, and works there part of the day. Somehow, you two have remained strangely ignorant of each other's lives. Are you convinced now that your wife is not walking the streets?"

"Let me go to her," cried Lorison, again struggling, "and beg her forgiveness!"

"Sir," said the priest, "do you owe me nothing? Be quiet. It seems so often that Heaven lets fall its choicest gifts into hands that must be taught to hold them. Listen again. You forgot that repentant sin must not compromise, but look up, for redemption, to the purest and best. You went to her with the fine-spun sophistry that peace could be found in a mutual guilt; and she, fearful of losing what her heart so craved, thought it worth the price to buy it with a desperate, pure, beautiful lie. I have known her since the day

she was born; she is as innocent and unsullied in life and deed as a holy saint. In that lowly street where she dwells she first saw the light, and she has lived there ever since, spending her days in generous self-sacrifice for others. Och, ye spalpeen!" continued Father Rogan, raising his finger in kindly anger at Lorison. "What for, I wonder, could she be afther making a fool of hersilf, and shammin' her swate soul with lies, for the like of you!"

"Sir," said Lorison, trembling, "say what you please of me. Doubt it as you must, I will yet prove my gratitude to you, and my devotion to her. But let

me speak to her once now, let me kneel for just one moment at her feet, and——"

"Tut, tut!" said the priest. "How many acts of a love drama do you think an old bookworm like me capable of witnessing? Besides, what kind of figures do we cut, spying upon the mysteries of midnight millinery! Go to meet your wife to-morrow, as she ordered you, and obey her thereafter, and maybe some time I shall get forgiveness for the part I have played in this night's work. Off wid yez down the shtairs, now! 'Tis late, and an ould man like me should be takin' his rest."



LIFE in itself is neither good nor evil; it is the place of good or evil, according as you prepare it for them.—*Montaigne*.



"My wife kept an old-fashioned precision of manner through all her admirable life—an excellent thing in woman, since it sets another value on her sweet familiarities."—*Robert Louis Stevenson*.



OUR own emotions are our recompense. If the sword wears out the scabbard a little too fast, it is because it is so bright and glowing.—*Charles Dickens*.



FLATTERY is their nature—to coax, flatter, and sweetly befool some one is every woman's business. She is none if she declines this office.—*William Makepeace Thackeray*.



WHILE beauty may attract and graciousness detain, yet to please generally is not to please profoundly, and they alone do both who put their vibrations in tune with the vibrations of others. There it is. To vary with another's varying moods, to be not only gracious but intuitive, not merely attractive but sympathetic.

Neophytes may have the soul of Chopin, the manners of Chesterfield, the wealth of Croesus; if they lack that, neophytes they will remain. If they possess it, then, in their company, poets lose their abasement, thugs feel at home, kings are at ease, wild beasts become tame.—*Edgar Saltus*.

What Is Love?

According to—

Nicolas Chamfort. Love is the exchange of two fantasies.

Ambrose Bierce Love is a temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like caries and many other ailments, is prevalent among civilized races living under artificial conditions; barbarous nations breathing pure air and eating simple food enjoy immunity from its ravages. It is sometimes fatal, but more frequently to the physicians than to the patient.

Rochefoucauld. It is difficult to define love. All that we can say of it is that in the soul it is a passion for reigning; in minds it is a sympathy; and in the body it is nothing but a latent and delicate desire to possess the loved object, after a good deal of mystery.

Heinrich Heine Love is a flickering flame between two darknesses. Whence comes it? From sparks incredibly small. How does it end? In nothingness equally incredible. The more raging the flame, the sooner it is burned out. Yet that does not prevent it from abandoning itself entirely to its fiery impulses, as if this flame were to burn eternally.

Kuno Fischer Only through woman does love appear among mankind. What woman's natural instincts demand is self-abandonment to a man; she desires this abandonment not for her own sake; but for the man's sake; she gives herself to him, for him. Now, abandoning oneself for another is self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice from an instinctive impulse is love. Woman feels the necessity of loving. This impulse is peculiar to woman alone.

Henri Murger Love is the egoism of the heart. It is the child of spontaneity. It is an improvisation. Friendship is built up, so to speak, of a sentiment that moves with circumspection. It is the egoism of the mind.

Julian Sturgis There are many kinds of love. There is the love of a child for sweetmeats. There is the love of a youth for himself—a vanity which needs feeding by girls' glances; and this the young do for the most part mistake for love. Then there is the love of man—but that is terrible. Women are loved; they like to be loved; they love love.

Percy Bysshe Shelley Love is that powerful attraction toward all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void, and seek to awaken in all things that are a community with what we experience within ourselves. If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's; if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, and that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own; that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood. That is love.

Edgar Saltus Love is a febrile complaint, a fever that ends with a yawn. Commonly, love is translated as the affection of somebody else. But it is not quite that. The privilege, mutually accorded by two people, of causing each other a good deal of discomfort, is perhaps more precise. But it is not quite that either. The fact of not being bored by the party of the second part is nearer, but still not just it. On the other hand, to say that love is the poetry of the senses sounds prosy. To say that it is to be two and yet but one seems calculating. Yet these definitions have their value. Love represents them all, and at the same time something else, for love is a pathological condition superinduced by a fermentation of the molecules of the imagination.



by
P. G. Wodehouse
Author of *The Intrusions of Jimmy*



OUT OF SCHOOL

MARK you, I am not defending James Datchett. I think James should not have done it. I merely say that there were extenuating circumstances.

Let us review the matter calmly and judicially.

The fact was that James, who was assistant master at Mr. Blatherwick's private school, at a small but sufficient salary, was also a poet. In his Harvard days he had contributed light verse to a college magazine; and for some months past now he had been endeavoring to do the same to the papers of New York, without success until that very morning.

I want you to follow me very closely here. As far as the excusing of James' conduct is concerned, it is now or never. If I fail at this point to touch you, James is, if I may use the expression, definitely in the soup.

Let me marshal my facts.

It was a simply bully morning.

James had just found a set of verses of his in print in a monthly magazine.

This had never happened to him before.

He was twenty-two.

And, just as he rounded the angle of the house, he came upon Violet, taking the air like himself.

"Good morning, sir," said Violet.

Violet was one of the housemaids, a trim, energetic little person with round blue eyes and a friendly smile. She smiled at James as she spoke. James halted.

From my list of contributory causes I find that I have omitted one item, viz., that there did not appear to be anybody else about. In another moment the deed was done. James stooped, and—in a purely brotherly manner—kissed Violet.

This, of course, was wrong. It was no part of James' duties as assistant master at Harrow House to wander about kissing housemaids, even in a brotherly manner. On the other hand, there was no great harm done. In the circles in which Violet moved the kiss was equivalent to the hand-

shake of loftier society. Everybody who came to the back door kissed Violet. The expressman did; so did the baker, the butcher, the grocer, the gardener, the postman, the policeman, and the fishmonger. They were men of widely differing views on most points. On religion, politics, and the prospects of the Giants in next Saturday's ball game their opinions clashed. But in one respect they were unanimous. Whenever they came to the back door of Harrow House, they all kissed Violet.

James passed on; and Violet, having sniffed the morning air for a few more minutes with her tiptilted nose, went indoors to attend to her work. One would have said that the incident was closed.

But retribution was on James' track. And the weapon she chose was Adolf.

One is forced to the conclusion that retribution must have been hard up for a weapon, for a more ignoble ally than Adolf it would have been hard to find.

He was one of that numerous band of Swiss and German youths who come to this country prepared to give their services ridiculously cheap in exchange for the opportunity of learning the English language. Mrs. Blatherwick, the masterful wife of the proprietor of Harrow House, had urged upon her husband the advantages of male servants over female as front door openers. Mrs. Blatherwick's view was that the parents of prospective pupils would be impressed at the sight of a man in livery. She would have liked something a bit more imposing than Adolf, but he was the best that could be got for the money. So Adolf came to Harrow House.

Had he not done so, he could not, of course, have witnessed from an upper window, as he did, the brotherly behavior of James Datchett. As it was, he got a most excellent view of it, and retired, grinning like a gargoyle, to

turn the thing over in his mind, and see what profit he might derive from the same.

James, meanwhile, ostensibly at his desk teaching a bored class the rudiments of Latin composition, was in spirit miles away from Harrow House. He was in the office of an important magazine, being warmly welcomed by the editor, whom he had consented to supply with light verse on the most advantageous terms.

The blow fell after tea, when, being off duty for an hour, he was smoking a pipe in his bedroom and trying to knock off a set of verses on a topical subject. *Adolf's entry just nipped in the bud a rather happy idea for the second stanza. He glared at the intruder.

"Well?" he growled. Poets are notoriously irritable.

"Anyising from ze fillage, sare?" said Adolf. The bulk of Adolf's perquisites was derived from the tips he received for going to the village for tobacco, stamps, and so on.

"No. Get out," said James.

He was surprised to find that Adolf, so far from getting out, came in and shut the door.

"'Zst!" said Adolf, with a finger on his lips.

James stared.

"In ze garden zis morning, I did zee you giss Violet. Zo!"

James' heart missed a beat. His present situation was not lavishly remunerated, but it was all that he had; and he knew the difficulty of obtaining posts in the scholastic world. If this worm were to give him away to Mr. Blatherwick, he would be lost. Mr. Blatherwick was an austere man. He would not overlook such a crime. And, in the very improbable event of his doing so, Mrs. Blatherwick would not. James gulped. If he got dismissed from Harrow House, he would have to go and live at home until he found an-

other post; and he remembered without pleasure his father's views, expressed nightly after dinner, on Young Men Who Ought To Be Earning Their Own Livings Instead Of Idling At Home. James had not the slightest desire to return to the ranks of the Y. M. W. O. T. B. E. T. O. L. I. O. I. A. H.

"What do you mean?" he said hoarsely.

"In ze garten. You und Violoed! Zo!" And Adolf, in the worst taste, gave a realistic imitation of the scene, himself sustaining the rôle of James.

"Well?" said James. There seemed nothing else to say.

"Lizzun! Berhaps I dell Herr Blatherwig. Berhaps I do not. It all tepend."

James appealed to his chivalry.

"I don't care about myself," he said, "but, say, you don't want to lose the poor girl her job. They'd be bound to throw her down, too."

Adolf's eyes gleamed.

"Zo! Lissun! Lissen! When I do first gom here, I to Violoed do say, 'I would giss you, Violoed,' and my arm I put round her waisdt—zo. But she do push ze zide of my face, und my lof is turned to hate."

James listened attentively to this tabloid tragedy, but made no comment. There was silence for a moment.

"Anyzing from ze fillage, sare?" Adolf's voice was meaning. James produced a quarter.

"Here you are, then. Get me a two-cent stamp, and keep the change."

"A doo-zent stdamp, sare? Yes, sare, I vill vly at vunce."

James' last impression of the departing one was a vast and greasy grin, stretching most of the way across his face.

Adolf, a blackmailer, in which rôle he now showed himself, differed in some respects from the conventional blackmailer of fiction. It may be that

he was doubtful as to how much James would stand for, or it may be that his soul as a general rule was above money. At any rate, in actual specie he took very little from James. He seemed to wish to be sent to the village oftener than before, but that was all. A dollar a week would have covered James' financial loss.

But he asserted himself in another way. In his most light-hearted moments Adolf never forgot the reason which had brought him to America. He had come to the country to learn the language, and he meant to do it. The difficulty which had always handicapped him hitherto, namely, the poverty of the vocabularies of the servants' quarters, was now removed. He appointed James tutor in chief of the English language to himself, and saw that he entered upon his duties at once.

The first time that he accosted James in the passage outside the classroom, and desired him to explain certain difficult words in a leading article of yesterday's paper, James was pleased. Adolf, he thought, regarded the painful episode as closed. He had accepted the quarter as the full price of silence, and was now endeavoring to be friendly in order to make amends.

This right-minded conduct gratified James. He felt genially disposed toward Adolf. He read the leading article, and proceeded to give a full and kindly explanation of the hard words. He took trouble over it. He went into the derivations of the words. He touched on certain rather tricky sub-meanings of the same. Adolf went away with any doubts he might have had of James' capabilities as a teacher of English definitely scattered. He felt that he had got hold of the right man.

There was a shade less geniality in James' manner when the same thing happened on the following morning. But he did not refuse to help the un-

tutored foreigner. The lecture was less exhaustive than that of the previous morning; but we must suppose that it satisfied Adolf, for he came again next day, his faith in his teacher undiminished.

James was polishing a set of verses. He turned on the student.

"Get out!" he howled. "And take that beastly paper away. Can't you see I'm busy? Do you think I can spend all my time teaching you to read? Get out!"

"Dere vos some hard words," said Adolf patiently, "of which I cannot the meaning——"

James briefly cursed the hard words.

"But," proceeded Adolf, "of one word—of der word 'giss'—I der meaning know. Zo!"

James looked at him. Adolf's face was wooden.

Two minutes later the English lesson was in full swing.

One may say bitter things about Fate; but it must be admitted that she frequently contrives to make amends after doing us a bad turn. It happened so in the case of James Datchett. Whether James deserved it is a matter for the private opinion of the reader.

The instrument in this case was Mr. Blatherwick.

Mr. Blatherwick was a long, grave man, one of the last to hold out against the antiwhisker crusade. He had expressionless blue eyes, and a general air of being present in body but absent in the spirit. Parents who visited the school put his vagueness down to activity of mind. "That busy brain," they thought, "is never at rest. Even while he is talking to us some abstruse mathematical problem or some obscure passage in the classics is occupying him."

About a fortnight after James' appointment to the post of English tutor to Adolf, the proprietor of Harrow

House was seated in his study, brooding on the hardships of life and the iniquities of parents. A certain type of parent, he thought with some bitterness, seemed to think that he kept a school from purely philanthropic motives. They appeared to be reluctant to risk offending him by mailing him a check, even though he had given them a lead, as it were, by forwarding his half-yearly bill. Young Puckey's father, for instance. All behindhand, as usual. He would pay up some time, no doubt, but to Mr. Blatherwick's mind there was no time like the present. He had had several heavy bills to meet, and a check would be extremely welcome. Why, he asked himself morosely, should he be harassed by this Puckey? It was not that Puckey had not the money. On the contrary, he was doing extremely well in the jute business. No, it was pure carelessness, and lack of consideration. Who was Puckey that he——

At this point in his meditations Violet entered with the after-dinner coffee and the last post.

Mr. Blatherwick took his letters listlessly. There were two of them; and one, he saw with a faint stir of hope, was in the handwriting of the man Puckey. He tore it open. The letter was a long one, and, as he gathered from a glance at the opening lines, one of apology. This was good, as showing that the pursuit of jute had not wholly robbed Puckey of the finer feelings. What was better was that there was a substantial check inside.

He opened the second letter. It was short, but full of the finest, noblest sentiments; to wit, that the writer, Charles J. Pickersgill, having heard the school so highly spoken of by his friend, Mr. Arthur Puckey, would be glad if Mr. Blatherwick could take in his three sons, aged seven, nine, and eleven respectively, at the earliest convenient date.

Mr. Blatherwick's first feeling was one of remorse, that even in thought he should have been harsh to the gold-hearted Puckey. His next was one of elation.

Violet, meanwhile, stood patiently in the doorway with the coffee. Mr. Blatherwick helped himself. His eye fell on Violet.

Violet was a friendly, warm-hearted little thing. She saw that Mr. Blatherwick had had good news; and, as the bearer of the letters which had contained it, she felt almost responsible. She smiled kindly up at Mr. Blatherwick.

The major portion of Mr. Blatherwick's mind was far away in the future, dealing with visions of a school grown to colossal proportions and patronized by millionaires who paid on the nail. The section of it which still worked in the present was just large enough to enable him to understand that he felt kindly, and even almost grateful to Violet. But it was too small to make him see how wrong it was to kiss her in a vague, fatherly way across the coffee tray just as James Datchett strolled into the room.

James, who, as was his habit, had come for coffee after seeing the boys into bed, paused. Mr. Blatherwick's mind came back into the present with a rush. An embarrassing situation was saved by Violet, who, remaining absolutely unmoved, supplied James with coffee and bustled out of the room. She left behind her a somewhat massive silence.

James broke it.

"Er—is the evening paper anywhere?" he said.

"No. Ah—no. Ah, yes, it is on the table."

"I just wanted to look at the sporting page."

Sport did not appeal to Mr. Blatherwick. He made no reply.

James had been reading for a moment, when his employer coughed.

"Er—Datchett."

James looked up.

"I—er—feel that perhaps——" He paused.

"Yes?" said James.

"That—er—that—perhaps you would care to read the leader. It is very thoughtfully expressed."

James proceeded to do so. Another cough interrupted him.

"Er—Datchett——"

James waited expectantly, but nothing more was forthcoming. Those were the last words that Mr. Blatherwick addressed to him that night.

It was some time after breakfast next day that Adolf trotted up for his English lesson.

"Zere are to-day some beyond-gombarison hard words which I do not understand. For egg-sample——"

It was at this point that James kicked him.

"Er—Datchett," said Mr. Blatherwick that night. "Er—Adolf came to me this afternoon with a malicious—er—story respecting yourself. I will not—er—particularize."

James nodded.

"I have, of course—er—dismissed Adolf. I cannot," proceeded Mr. Blatherwick firmly, "overlook such slanderous conduct on the part of any domestic servant in this house. I—er—it would be impossible."

After a slight pause, James said that it looked as if there might be rain tomorrow.



DEFECT in manners is usually the defect in fine perceptions. Men are too coarsely made for the delicacy of beautiful carriage and customs.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

A Book Lovers' Tournament

*Introducing a new kind
of mystery story*

In THE FORETASTE of this issue are announced the title and author of the December anonymous story and the names of the successful entrants in the December BOOK LOVERS' TOURNAMENT. — The Editor.

HOW fully does the style betray the writer? Could you detect the essence of Shakespeare in an obscure passage of his work? Could you read "Dickens" between the lines of a Pickwickian dialogue? Would the felicitous flow of an anonymous extract from a Stevenson romance reveal its author to you?

On the next page you will find a complete story whose title is withheld and whose author is left anonymous. The name of the author is known wherever books are circulated.

Can you identify the author and the story?

* * * * *

If you can detect the title of this month's anonymous story and the name of its author, send us a letter of not more than one thousand words, and in it tell us:

1. *The title of the story.*
2. *The full name of the story's author.*
3. *Your reason for attributing the story to the author you have named.*
4. *How you discovered the title of the story.*
5. *What you think of the story.*

* * * * *

TO the writer of the most interesting letter composed as above outlined and correctly naming the title and author of the anonymous story appearing in this issue of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, the editors will pay fifty dollars. To each of the writers of the ten letters next in order of excellence the editors will pay five dollars.

* * * * *

LETTERS will be judged on the basis of literary merit and authenticated accuracy. In order to receive consideration, each letter must show that its writer has definite knowledge of the anonymous story's title and author. This knowledge may come of standing familiarity with the works of the author under consideration, or may be derived from inquiry, research, and comparison. But each letter must clearly explain on what authority its writer bases his conclusion. Letters which exhibit evidence of guesswork will not receive consideration.

* * * * *

ALL letters competing in the Book Lovers' Tournament of this issue must be received by the Editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, at 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, on or before February 10th, 1926.

The names of successful contestants will be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for the month of April, 1926.

There will be another anonymous story in the March issue.

Who Wrote This Story?



What Is Its Title?

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,
By the hot sun emptied, and blistered and
dried

Log in the *reh*-grass, hidden and lone;
Bund where the earth rat's mounds are
strown;

Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;
Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels,
Jump if you dare on a steed untried—
Safer it is to go wide—go wide!

*Hark, from in front where the best men
ride—*

"Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!"
—*The Peora Hunt.*

ONCE upon a time there lived at Simla a very pretty girl, the daughter of a poor but honest district and sessions judge. She was a good girl, but could not help knowing her power and using it. Her mamma was very anxious about her daughter's future, as all good mammas should be.

When a man is a commissioner and a bachelor and has the right of wearing open-work-jam-tart jewels in gold and enamel on his clothes and of going through a door before every one except a member of council, a lieutenant governor, or a viceroy, he is worth marrying. At least that is what ladies say. There was a commissioner in Simla in those days who was and wore and did all I have said. He was a plain man—

an ugly man—the ugliest man in Asia, with two exceptions. His was a face to dream about and try to carve on a pipe head afterward. His name was Saggott—Barr-Saggott—Anthony Barr-Saggott, and six letters to follow. Departmentally, he was one of the best men the government of India owned. Socially he was like a blandishing gorilla.

When he turned his attentions to Miss Beighton I believe that Mrs. Beighton wept with delight at the reward Providence had sent her in her old age.

Mr. Beighton held his tongue. He was an easy-going man.

Now a commissioner is very rich. His pay is beyond the dreams of avarice—is so enormous that he can afford to save and scrape in a way that would almost discredit a member of council. Most commissioners are mean; but Barr-Saggott was an exception. He entertained royally; he horsed himself well; he gave dances; he was a power in the land; and he behaved as such.

Consider that everything I am writing of took place in an almost prehistoric era in the history of British India. Some folk may remember the years be-

fore lawn tennis was born, when we all played croquet. There were seasons before that, if you will believe me, when even croquet had not been invented, and archery—which was revived in England in 1844—was as great a pest as lawn tennis is now. People talked learnedly about “holding” and “loosing,” “steles,” “reflexed bows,” “fifty-six-pound bows,” “backed” or “self-yew bows,” as we talk about “rallies,” “volleys,” “smashes,” “returns,” and “sixteen-ounce rackets.”

Miss Beighton shot divinely over ladies’ distance—sixty yards, that is—and was acknowledged the best lady archer in Simla. Men called her “Diana of Tara-Devi.”

Barr-Saggott paid her great attention; and, as I have said, the heart of her mother was uplifted in consequence. Kitty Beighton took matters more calmly. It was pleasant to be singled out by a commissioner with letters after his name, and to fill the hearts of other girls with bad feelings. But there was no denying the fact that Barr-Saggott was phenomenally ugly; and all his attempts to adorn himself only made him more grotesque. He was not christened “The *Langur*”—which means gray ape—for nothing. It was pleasant, Kitty thought, to have him at her feet, but it was better to escape from him and ride with the graceless Cubbon—the man in a Dragoon Regiment at Umballa—the boy with a handsome face, and no prospects. Kitty liked Cubbon more than a little. He never pretended for a moment that he was anything less than head over heels in love with her; for he was an honest boy. So Kitty fled, now and again, from the stately wooings of Barr-Saggott to the company of young Cubbon, and was scolded by her mamma in consequence.

“But, mother,” she said, “Mr. Saggott is such—such a—is so *fearfully* ugly, you know!”

“My dear,” said Mrs. Beighton piously, “we cannot be other than an all-ruling Providence has made us. Besides, you will take precedence of your own mother, you know! Think of that and be reasonable.”

Then Kitty put up her little chin and said irreverent things about precedence, and commissioners, and matrimony. Mr. Beighton rubbed the top of his head; for he was an easy-going man.

Late in the season, when he judged that the time was ripe, Barr-Saggott developed a plan which did great credit to his administrative powers. He arranged an archery tournament for ladies, with a most sumptuous diamond-studded bracelet as prize. He drew up his terms skillfully, and every one saw that the bracelet was a gift to Miss Beighton; the acceptance carrying with it the hand and the heart of Commissioner Barr-Saggott. The terms were a St. Leonard’s Round—thirty-six shots at sixty yards—under the rules of the Simla Toxophilite Society.

All Simla was invited. There were beautifully arranged tea tables under the deodars at Annandale, where the grand stand is now; and, alone in its glory, winking in the sun, sat the diamond bracelet in a blue-velvet case. Miss Beighton was anxious—almost too anxious—to compete. On the appointed afternoon all Simla rode down to Annandale to witness the Judgment of Paris turned upside down. Kitty rode with young Cubbon, and it was easy to see that the boy was troubled in his mind. He must be held innocent of everything that followed. Kitty was pale and nervous, and looked long at the bracelet. Barr-Saggott was gorgeously dressed, even more nervous than Kitty, and more hideous than ever.

Mrs. Beighton smiled condescendingly, as befitted the mother of a potential commissioneress, and the shooting began; all the world standing a semi-

circle as the ladies came out one after the other.

Nothing is so tedious as an archery competition. They shot, and they shot, and they kept on shooting, till the sun left the valley, and the little breezes got up in the deodars, and people waited for Miss Beighton to shoot and win. Cubbon was at one horn of the semicircle round the shooters, and Barr-Saggott at the other. Miss Beighton was last on the list. The scoring had been weak, and the bracelet, plus Commissioner Barr-Saggott, was hers to a certainty.

The commissioner strung her bow with his own sacred hands. She stepped forward, looked at the bracelet, and her first arrow went true to a hair—full into the heart of the "gold"—counting nine points.

Young Cubbon on the left turned white, and his devil prompted Barr-Saggott to smile. Now horses used to shy when Barr-Saggott smiled. Kitty saw that smile. She looked to her left-front, gave an almost imperceptible nod to Cubbon, and went on shooting.

I wish I could describe the scene that followed. It was out of the ordinary, and most improper. Miss Kitty fitted her arrows with immense deliberation, so that every one might see what she was doing. She was a perfect shot; and her forty-six-pound bow suited her to a nicety. She pinned the wooden legs of the target with great care four successive times. She pinned the wooden top of the target once, and all the ladies looked at each other. Then she began some fancy shooting at the white, which, if you hit it, counts exactly one point. She put five arrows into the white. It

was wonderful archery; but, seeing that her business was to make "golds" and win the bracelet, Barr-Saggott turned a delicate green, like young water cress. Next she shot over the target twice, then wide to the left twice—always with the same deliberation—while a chilly hush fell over the company, and Mrs. Beighton took out her handkerchief. Then Kitty shot at the ground in front of the target, and split several arrows. Then she made a red—or seven points—just to show what she could do if she liked, and she finished up her amazing performance with some more fancy shooting at the target supports. Here is her score as it was pricked off:

Miss Beighton						
Gold.	Red.	Blue.	Black.	White.	Total	Hits.
1	1	0	0	5		7
Total Score 21						

Barr-Saggott looked as if the last few arrowheads had been driven into his legs instead of the target's, and the deep stillness was broken by a little snubby, mottled, half-grown girl, saying in a shrill voice of triumph: "Then I've won!"

Mrs. Beighton did her best to bear up; but she wept in the presence of the people. No training could help her through such a disappointment. Kitty unstrung her bow with a vicious jerk, and went back to her place, while Barr-Saggott was trying to pretend that he enjoyed snapping the bracelet on the snubby girl's raw, red wrist. It was an awkward scene—most awkward. Every one tried to depart in a body and leave Kitty to the mercy of her mamma.

But Cubbon took her away instead, and—the rest isn't worth printing.



THE LIGHT THAT LIES IN WOMAN'S EYES

"Ah, mademoiselle, how much improved my pipe would have been if I could have lighted it at your eyes!"—*Henri Mürger.*

E. W. Hornung ^{by}

Author of



"The Ides of March"
and
"A Costume Piece"

GENTLEMEN and PLAYERS

A Story of Raffles. "The Amateur Cracksman"

OLD Raffles may or may not have been an exceptional criminal, but as a cricketer I dare swear he was unique. Himself a dangerous bat, a brilliant field, and perhaps the very finest slow bowler of his decade, he took incredibly little interest in the game at large.

"Cricket," said Raffles, "like everything else, is good enough sport until you discover a better. As a source of excitement it isn't in it with other things you wot of, Bunny, and the involuntary comparison becomes a bore. What's the satisfaction of taking a man's wicket when you want his spoons? Still, if you can bowl a bit, your low cunning won't get rusty, and always looking for the weak spot's just the kind of mental exercise one wants. Yes, perhaps there's some affinity between the two things after all. But I'd chuck up cricket to-morrow, Bunny, if

it wasn't for the glorious protection it affords a person of my proclivities."

"How so?" said I. "It brings you before the public, I should have thought, far more than is either safe or wise."

"My dear Bunny, that's exactly where you make a mistake. To follow crime with reasonable impunity you simply *must* have a parallel, ostensible career—the more public the better. The principle is obvious. Mr. Peace, of pious memory, disarmed suspicion by acquiring a local reputation for playing the fiddle and taming animals, and it's my profound conviction that Jack the Ripper was a really eminent public man, whose speeches were very likely reported alongside his atrocities. Fill the bill in some prominent part, and you'll never be suspected of doubling it with another of equal prominence. That's why I want you to cultivate journalism, my boy, and sign all you can. And it's

the one and only reason why I don't burn my bats for fire wood."

Nevertheless, when he did play there was no keener performer on the field, nor one more anxious to do well for his side.

It became my pleasure to accompany him to all his matches, to watch every ball he bowled, or played, or fielded, and to sit chatting with him in the pavilion when he was doing none of these three things. You might have seen us there, side by side, during the greater part of the Gentlemen's first innings against the Players—who had lost the toss—on the second Monday in July.

We were to be seen, but not heard, for Raffles had failed to score, and was uncommonly cross for a player who cared so little for the game. I was therefore much surprised when a young fellow of the exquisite type came and squeezed himself in between us, and met with a perfectly civil reception despite the liberty. I did not know the boy by sight, nor did Raffles introduce us; but their conversation proclaimed at once a slightness of acquaintanceship and a license on the lad's part which combined to puzzle me. Mystification reached its height when Raffles was informed that the other's father was anxious to meet him, and he instantly consented to gratify that whim.

"He's in the ladies' inclosure. Will you come round now?"

"With pleasure," says Raffles. "Keep a place for me, Bunny."

And they were gone.

"Young Crowley," said some voice further back. "Last year's Harrow Eleven."

"I remember him. Worst man in the team."

"Keen cricketer, however. Stopped till he was twenty to get his colors. Governor made him. Keen breed. Oh, pretty, sir! Very pretty!"

The game was boring me. I only

came to see old Raffles perform. Soon I was looking wistfully for his return, and at length I saw him beckoning me from the palings to the right.

"Want to introduce you to old Amersteth," he whispered, when I joined him. "They've a cricket week next month, when this boy Crowley comes of age, and we've both got to go down and play."

"Both!" I echoed. "But I'm no cricketer!"

"Shut up!" says Raffles. "Leave that to me. I've been lying for all I'm worth," he added sepulchraly as we reached the bottom of the steps. "I trust to you not to give the show away."

Lord Amersteth was a fine-looking man with a short mustache and a double chin. He received me with much dry courtesy, through which, however, it was not difficult to read a less flattering tale. I was accepted as the inevitable appendage of the invaluable Raffles, with whom I felt deeply incensed as I made my bow.

"I have been bold enough," said Lord Amersteth, "to ask one of the Gentlemen of England to come down and play some rustic cricket for us next month. He is kind enough to say that he would have liked nothing better, but for this little fishing expedition of yours, Mr. —, Mr. —" and Lord Amersteth succeeded in remembering my name.

It was, of course, the first I had ever heard of that fishing expedition, but I made haste to say that it could easily, and should certainly, be put off. Raffles gleamed approval through his eyelashes. Lord Amersteth bowed and shrugged.

"You're very good, I'm sure," said he. "But I understand you're a cricketer yourself?"

"He was one at school," said Raffles, with infamous readiness.

"Not a real cricketer," I was stammering meanwhile.

"In the eleven?" said Lord Amersteth.

"I'm afraid not," said I.

"But only just out of it," declared Raffles, to my horror.

"Well, well, we can't all play for the Gentlemen," said Lord Amersteth slyly. "My son Crowley only just scraped into the eleven at Harrow, and *he's* going to play. I may even come in myself at a pinch; so you won't be the only duffer, if you are one, and I shall be very glad if you will come down and help us too. You shall flog a stream before breakfast and after dinner, if you like."

"I should be very proud," I was beginning, as the mere prelude to resolute excuses; but the eye of Raffles opened wide upon me; and I hesitated weakly, to be duly lost.

Raffles rose, but I caught the sleeve of his blazer.

"What are you thinking of?" I whispered savagely. "I was nowhere near the eleven. I'm no sort of cricketer. I shall have to get out of this!"

"Not you," he whispered back. "You needn't play, but come you must. If you wait for me after half past six I'll tell you why."

Then the bell rang, and I climbed to the top of the pavilion to watch Raffles bowl.

No subtleties are lost up there; and if ever a bowler was full of them, it was A. J. Raffles on this day, as, indeed, all the cricket world remembers.

"I felt like bowling this afternoon," he told me later in the hansom. "I felt venomous! Nothing riles me more than being asked about for my cricket as though I were a pro myself."

"Then why on earth go?"

"To punish them, and—because we shall be jolly hard up, Bunny, before the season's over!"

"Ah!" said I. "I thought it was that."

"Of course, it was! It seems they're going to have the very devil of a week of it—balls—dinner parties—swagger

house party—general junketings—and obviously a houseful of diamonds as well. Diamonds galore! As a general rule nothing would induce me to abuse my position as a guest. I've never done it, Bunny. But in this case we're engaged like the waiters and the band, and by heaven we'll take our toll! Let's have a quiet dinner somewhere and talk it over."

"It seems rather a vulgar sort of theft," I could not help saying; and to this, my single protest, Raffles instantly assented.

"It is a vulgar sort," said he; "but I can't help that. We're getting vulgarly hard up again, and there's an end on 't. Besides, these people deserve it, and can afford it. And don't you run away with the idea that all will be plain sailing; nothing will be easier than getting some stuff, and nothing harder than avoiding all suspicion, as, of course, we must. We may come away with no more than a good working plan of the premises. Who knows? In any case there's weeks of thinking in it for you and me."

But with those weeks I will not weary you further than by remarking that the "thinking" was done entirely by Raffles, who did not always trouble to communicate his thoughts to me.

It was on Monday, the tenth of August, that we were due at Milchester Abbey, Dorset; and the beginning of the month found us cruising about that very county, with fly rods actually in our hands. The idea was that we should acquire at once a local reputation as decent fishermen, and some knowledge of the countryside, with a view to further and more deliberate operations in the event of an unprofitable week. There was another idea which Raffles kept to himself until he had got me down there. Then one day he produced a cricket ball in a meadow we were crossing, and threw me catches for an hour together. More hours he spent in bowling to me

on the nearest green; and, if I was never a cricketer, at least I came nearer to being one, by the end of that week, than ever before or since.

Incident began early on the Monday. We had sallied forth from a desolate little junction within quite a few miles of Milchester, had been caught in a shower, had run for shelter to a way-side inn. A florid, overdressed man was drinking in the parlor, and I could have sworn it was at the sight of him that Raffles recoiled on the threshold, and afterward insisted on returning to the station through the rain. He assured me, however, that the odor of stale ale had almost knocked him down. And I had to make what I could of his speculative, down-cast eyes and knitted brows.

Milchester Abbey is a gray, quadrangular pile, deep-set in rich, woody country, and twinkling with triple rows of quaint windows, every one of which seemed alight as we drove up just in time to dress for dinner. The carriage had whirled us under I know not how many triumphal arches in process of construction, and past the tents and flagpoles of a juicy-looking cricket field, on which Raffles undertook to bowl up to his reputation. But the chief signs of festival were within, where we found an enormous house party assembled, including more persons of pomp, majesty, and dominion than I had ever encountered in one room before. I confess I felt overpowered. Our errand and my own pretenses combined to rob me of an address upon which I have sometimes plumed myself; and I have a grim recollection of my nervous relief when dinner was at last announced. I little knew what an ordeal it was to prove.

I had taken in a much less formidable young lady than might have fallen to my lot. Indeed I began by blessing my good fortune in this respect. Miss Melhuish was merely the rector's

daughter, and she had only been asked to make an even number. She informed me of both facts before the soup reached us, and her subsequent conversation was characterized by the same engaging candor. It exposed what was little short of a mania for imparting information. I had simply to listen, to nod, and to be thankful. When I confessed to knowing very few of those present, even by sight, my entertaining companion proceeded to tell me who everybody was, beginning on my left and working conscientiously round to her right. This lasted quite a long time, and really interested me; but a great deal that followed did not; and, obviously to recapture my unworthy attention, Miss Melhuish suddenly asked me, in a sensational whisper, whether I could keep a secret.

I said I thought I might, whereupon another question followed, in still lower and more thrilling accents:

"Are you afraid of burglars?"

Burglars! I was roused at last. The word stabbed me. I repeated it in horrified query.

"So I've found something to interest you at last!" said Miss Melhuish, in naïve triumph. "Yes—burglars! But don't speak so loud. It's supposed to be kept a great secret. I really oughtn't to tell you at all!"

"But what is there to tell?" I whispered with satisfactory impatience.

"You promise not to speak of it?"

"Of course!"

"Well, then, there are burglars in the neighborhood."

"Have they committed any robberies?"

"Not yet."

"Then how do you know?"

"They've been seen. In the district. Two well-known London thieves!"

Two! I looked at Raffles. I had done so often during the evening, envying him his high spirits, his iron nerve, his buoyant wit, his perfect ease

and self-possession. But now I pitied him; through all my own terror and consternation, I pitied him as he sat eating and drinking, and laughing and talking, without a cloud of fear or of embarrassment on his handsome, taking, daredevil face. I caught up my champagne and emptied the glass.

"Who has seen them?" I then asked calmly.

"A detective. They were traced down from town a few days ago. They are believed to have designs on the Abbey!"

"But why aren't they run in?"

"Exactly what I asked papa on the way here this evening; he says there is no warrant out against the men at present, and all that can be done is to watch their movements."

"Oh! so they are being watched?"

"Yes, by a detective who is down here on purpose. And I heard Lord Amersteth tell papa that they had been seen this afternoon at Warbeck Junction!"

The very place where Raffles and I had been caught in the rain! Our stampede from the inn was now explained; on the other hand, I was no longer to be taken by surprise by anything that my companion might have to tell me; and I succeeded in looking her in the face with a smile.

"This is really quite exciting, Miss Melhuish," said I. "May I ask how you come to know so much about it?"

"It's papa," was the confidential reply. "Lord Amersteth consulted him, and he consulted me. But for goodness' sake don't let it get about! I can't think *what* tempted me to tell you!"

"You may trust me, Miss Melhuish. But—aren't you frightened?"

Miss Melhuish giggled.

"Not a bit! They won't come to the rectory. There's nothing for them there. But look round the table! Look at the diamonds! Look at old Lady Melrose's necklace alone!"

The Dowager Marchioness of Melrose was one of the few persons whom it had been unnecessary to point out to me. She sat on Lord Amersteth's right, flourishing her ear trumpet, and drinking champagne with her usual notorious freedom, as dissipated and kindly a dame as the world has ever seen. It was a necklace of diamonds and sapphires that rose and fell about her ample neck.

"They say it's worth five thousand pounds at least," continued my companion. "Lady Margaret told me so this morning—that's Lady Margaret next your Mr. Raffles, you know—and the old dear *will* wear them every night. Think what a haul they would be! No; we don't feel in immediate danger at the rectory."

When the ladies rose, Miss Melhuish bound me to fresh vows of secrecy; and left me, I should think, with some remorse for her indiscretion, but more satisfaction at the importance which it had undoubtedly given her in my eyes. The opinion may smack of vanity, though, in reality, the very springs of conversation reside in that same human, universal itch to thrill the auditor. The peculiarity of Miss Melhuish was that she must be thrilling at all costs. And thrilling she had surely been.

I spare you my feelings of the next two hours. I tried hard to get a word with Raffles, but again and again I failed. In the dining room he and Crowley lit their cigarettes with the same match, and had their heads together all the time. In the drawing-room I had the mortification of hearing him talk interminable nonsense into the ear trumpet of Lady Melrose, whom he knew in town. Lastly, in the billiard room, they had a great and lengthy pool, while I sat aloof and chafed more than ever in the company of a very serious Scotchman, who had arrived since dinner, and who would talk of nothing but the recent improvements in in-

stantaneous photography. He had not come to play in the matches, he told me, but to obtain for Lord Amersteth such a series of cricket photographs as had never been taken before; whether as an amateur or a professional photographer I was unable to determine. I remember, however, seeking distraction in little bursts of resolute attention to the conversation of this bore. And so at last the long ordeal ended; glasses were emptied, men said good night, and I followed Raffles to his room.

"It's all up!" I gasped, as I shut the door. "We're being watched. We've been followed down from town. There's a detective here on the spot!"

"How do you know?" asked Raffles, turning upon me quite sharply, but without the least dismay. And I told him how I knew.

"Of course," I added, "it was the fellow we saw in the inn this afternoon."

"The detective?" said Raffles. "Do you mean to say you don't know a detective when you see one, Bunny?"

"If that wasn't the fellow, which is?"

Raffles shook his head.

"To think that you've been talking to him for the last hour in the billiard room and couldn't spot what he was!"

"The Scotch photographer——"

I paused aghast.

"Scotch he is," said Raffles, "and photographer he may be. He is also Inspector Mackenzie of Scotland Yard—the very man I sent the message to that night last April. And you couldn't spot who he was in a whole hour! Oh, Bunny, Bunny, you were never built for crime!"

"But," said I, "if that was Mackenzie, who was the fellow you bolted from at Warbeck?"

"The man he's watching."

"But he's watching us!"

Raffles looked at me with a pitying eye, and shook his head again before handing me his open cigarette case.

"I don't know whether smoking's forbidden in one's bedroom, but you'd better take one of these and stand tight, Bunny, because I'm going to say something offensive."

I helped myself with a laugh.

"Say what you like, my dear fellow, if it really isn't you and I that Mackenzie's after."

"Well, then, it isn't, and it couldn't be, and nobody but a born Bunny would suppose for a moment that it was! Do you seriously think he would sit there and knowingly watch his man playing pool under his nose? Well, he might; he's a cool hand, Mackenzie; but I'm not cool enough to win a pool under such conditions. At least I don't think I am; it would be interesting to see. The situation wasn't free from strain as it was, though I knew he wasn't thinking of us. Crowley told me all about it after dinner, you see, and then I'd seen one of the men for myself this afternoon.

"You thought it was a detective who made me turn tail at that inn. I really don't know why I didn't tell you at the time, but it was just the opposite. That loud, red-faced brute is one of the cleverest thieves in London, and I once had a drink with him and our mutual fence. I was an Eastender from tongue to toe at the moment, but you will understand that I don't run unnecessary risks of recognition by a brute like that."

"He's not alone, I hear."

"By no means; there's at least one other man with him; and it's suggested that there may be an accomplice here in the house."

"Did Lord Crowley tell you so?"

"Crowley and the champagne between them. In confidence, of course, just as your girl told you; but even in confidence he never let on about Mackenzie. He told me there was a detective in the background, but that was all. Putting him up as a guest is evidently

their big secret, to be kept from the other guests because it might offend them, but more particularly from the servants whom he's here to watch. That's my reading of the situation, Bunny, and you will agree with me that it's infinitely more interesting than we could have imagined it would prove."

"But infinitely more difficult for us," said I, with a sigh of pusillanimous relief. "Our hands are tied for this week, at all events."

"Not necessarily, my dear Bunny, though I admit that the chances are against us. Yet I'm not so sure of that either. There are all sorts of possibilities in these three-cornered combinations. Set A to watch B, and he won't have an eye left for C. That's the obvious theory, but then Mackenzie's a very big A. I should be sorry to have any boodle about me with that man in the house. Yet it would be great to nip in between A and B and score off them both at once! It would be worth a risk, Bunny, to do that; it would be worth risking something merely to take on old hands like B and his men at their own old game! Eh, Bunny? That would be something like a match. Gentlemen and Players at single wicket, by Jove!"

His eyes were brighter than I had known them for many a day. They shone with the perverted enthusiasm which was roused in him only by the contemplation of some new audacity. He kicked off his shoes and began pacing his room with noiseless rapidity; not since the night of the Old Bohemian dinner to Reuben Rosenthal had Raffles exhibited such excitement in my presence; and I was not sorry at the moment to be reminded of the fiasco to which that banquet had been the prelude.

"My dear A. J.," said I in his very own tone, "you're far too fond of the uphill game; you will eventually fall a

victim to the sporting spirit and nothing else. Take a lesson from our last escape, and fly lower as you value our skins. Study the house as much as you like, but do—not—go and shove your head into Mackenzie's mouth!"

My wealth of metaphor brought him to a standstill, with his cigarette between his fingers and a grin beneath his shining eyes.

"You're quite right, Bunny. I won't. I really won't. Yet—you saw old Lady Melrose's necklace? I've been wanting it for years! But I'm not going to play the fool; honor bright, I'm not; yet—by Jove!—to get to windward of the professors and Mackenzie, too! It would be a great game, Bunny, it would be a great game!"

"Well, you mustn't play it this week."

"No, no, I won't. But I wonder how the professors think of going to work? That's what one wants to know. I wonder if they've really got an accomplice in the house. How I wish I knew their game! But it's all right, Bunny; it shall be as you wish."

And with that assurance I went off to my own room, and so to bed with an incredibly light heart. Here at Milchester, in the long-dreaded cricket week, I had after all a quite excellent time.

It is true that there were other factors in this pleasing disappointment. In the first place, *mirabile dictu*, there were one or two even greater duffers than I on the Abbey cricket field. Indeed, quite early in the week, when it was of most value to me, I gained considerable kudos for a lucky catch; a ball, of which I had merely heard the hum, stuck fast in my hand, which Lord Amersteth himself grasped in public congratulation.

Miss Melhuish said pretty things to me at the great ball in honor of Viscount Crowley's majority; she also told me that was the night on which the rob-

bers would assuredly make their raid, and was full of arch tremors when we sat out in the garden, though the entire premises were illuminated all night long. Meanwhile the quiet Scotchman took countless photographs by day, which he developed by night in a dark room admirably situated in the servants' part of the house; and it is my firm belief that only two of his fellow guests knew Mr. Clephane of Dundee for Inspector Mackenzie of Scotland Yard.

The week was to end with a trumpety match on the Saturday, which two or three of us intended abandoning early in order to return to town that night. The match, however, was never played. In the small hours of the Saturday morning a tragedy took place at Milchester Abbey.

Let me tell of the thing as I saw and heard it. My room opened upon the central gallery, and was not even on the same floor as that on which Raffles—and I think all the other men—were quartered. I had been put, in fact, into the dressing room of one of the grand suites, and my too-near neighbors were old Lady Melrose and my host and hostess. Now, by the Friday evening the actual festivities were at an end, and, for the first time that week, I must have been sound asleep since midnight, when all at once I found myself sitting up breathless. A heavy thud had come against my door, and now I heard hard breathing and the dull stamp of muffled feet.

"I've got ye," muttered a voice. "It's no use struggling."

It was the Scotch detective, and a new fear turned me cold. There was no reply, but the hard breathing grew harder still, and the muffled feet beat the floor to a quicker measure. In sudden panic I sprang out of bed, and flung open my door. A light burned low on the landing, and by it I could see Mackenzie swaying and staggering in a si-

lent tussle with some powerful adversary.

"Hold this man!" he cried, as I appeared. "Hold the rascal!"

But I stood like a fool until the pair of them backed into me, when, with a deep breath I flung myself on the fellow, whose face I had seen at last. He was one of the footmen who waited at table; and no sooner had I pinned him than the detective loosed his hold.

"Hang on to him," he cried, "There's more of 'em below."

And he went leaping down the stairs, as other doors opened and Lord Amersteth and his son appeared simultaneously in their pajamas. At that my man ceased struggling; but I was still holding him when Crowley turned up the gas.

"What the devil's all this?" asked Lord Amersteth, blinking. "Who was that ran downstairs?"

"Mac—Clephane!" said I hastily.

"Aha!" said he, turning to the footman. "So you're the scoundrel, are you? Well done! Well done! Where was he caught?"

I had no idea.

"Here's Lady Melrose's door open," said Crowley. "Lady Melrose! Lady Melrose!"

"You forget she's deaf," said Lord Amersteth. "Ah! that'll be her maid."

An inner door had opened; next instant there was a little shriek, and a white figure gesticulated on the threshold.

"Où donc est l'écrin de Madame la Marquise? La fenêtre est ouverte. Il a disparu!"

"Window open and jewel case gone, by Jove!" exclaimed Lord Amersteth. *"Mais comment est Madame la Marquise? Est elle bien?"*

"Oui, milor. Elle dort."

"Sleeps through it all," said my lord. "She's the only one, then!"

"What made Mackenzie—Clephane—bolt?" young Crowley asked me.

"Said there were more of them below."

"Why the devil couldn't you tell us so before?" he cried, and went leaping downstairs in his turn.

He was followed by nearly all the cricketers, who now burst upon the scene in a body, only to desert it for the chase. Raffles was one of them, and I would gladly have been another, had not the footman chosen this moment to hurl me from him, and to make a dash in the direction from which they had come. Lord Amersteth had him in an instant; but the fellow fought desperately, and it took the two of us to drag him downstairs, amid a terrified chorus from half-open doors. Eventually we handed him over to two other footmen who appeared with their night-shirts tucked into their trousers, and my host was good enough to compliment me as he led the way outside.

"I thought I heard a shot," he added, "Didn't you?"

"I thought I heard three."

And out we dashed into the darkness.

I remember how the gravel pricked my feet, how the wet grass numbed them as we made for the sound of voices on an outlying lawn. So dark was the night that we were in the cricketer's midst before we saw the shimmer of their pajamas; and then Lord Amersteth almost trod on Mackenzie as he lay prostrate in the dew.

"Who's this?" he cried. "What on earth's happened?"

"It's Clephane," said a man who knelt over him. "He's got a bullet in him somewhere."

"Is he alive?"

"Barely."

"Good God! Where's Crowley?"

"Here I am," called a breathless voice. "It's no good, you fellows. There's nothing to show which way they've gone. Here's Raffles; he's

chucked it, too." And they ran up panting.

"Well, we've got one of them, at all events," muttered Lord Amersteth. "The next thing is to get this poor fellow indoors. Take his shoulders, somebody. Now his middle. Join hands under him. All together, now; that's the way. Poor fellow! Poor fellow! His name isn't Clephane at all. He's a Scotland Yard detective, down here for these very villains!"

Raffles was the first to express surprise; but he had also been the first to raise the wounded man. Nor had any of them a stronger or more tender hand in the slow procession to the house. In a little we had the senseless man stretched on a sofa in the library. And there, with ice on his wound and brandy in his throat, his eyes opened and his lips moved.

Lord Amersteth bent down to catch the words.

"Yes, yes," said he; "we've got one of them safe and sound. The brute you collared upstairs." Lord Amersteth bent lower. "By Jove! Lowered the jewel case out of the window, did he? And they've got clean away with it! Well, well! I only hope we'll be able to pull this good fellow through. He's off again."

An hour passed; the sun was rising.

It found a dozen young fellows on the settees in the billiard room, drinking whisky and soda water in their overcoats and pajamas, and still talking excitedly in one breath. A time-table was being passed from hand to hand; the doctor was still in the library. At last the door opened, and Lord Amersteth put in his head.

"It isn't hopeless," said he, "but it's bad enough. There'll be no cricket to-day."

Another hour, and most of us were on our way to catch the early train; between us we filled a compartment al-

most to suffocation. And still we talked all together of the night's event; and still I was a little hero in my way, for having kept my hold of the one ruffian who had been taken; and my gratification was subtle and intense. Raffles watched me under lowered lids. Not a word had we had together; not a word did we have until we had left the others at Paddington, and were skinning through the streets in a hansom with noiseless tires and a tinkling bell.

"Well, Bunny," said Raffles, "so the professors have it, eh?"

"Yes," said I. "And I'm jolly glad!"

"That poor Mackenzie has a ball in his chest?"

"That you and I have been on the decent side for once."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"You're hopeless, Bunny, quite hopeless! I take it you wouldn't have refused your share if the boodle had fallen to us? Yet you positively enjoy coming off second best—for the second time running! I confess, however, that the professors' methods were full of interest to me. I, for one, have probably gained as much in experience as I have lost in other things. That lowering the jewel case out of the window was a very simple and effective expedient; two of them had been waiting below for it for hours."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I saw them from my own window, which was just above the dear old lady's. I was fretting for that necklace in particular, when I went up to turn in for our last night—and I happened to look out of my window. In point of fact, I wanted to see whether the one below was open, and whether there was the slightest chance of work-

ing the oracle with my sheet for a rope. Of course I took the precaution of turning my light off first, and it was a lucky thing I did. I saw the pros right down below, and they never saw me. I saw a little tiny luminous disk just for an instant, and then again for an instant a few minutes later. Of course I knew what it was, for I have my own watch dial daubed with luminous paint; it makes a lantern of sorts when you can get no better. But these fellows were not using theirs as a lantern. They were under the old lady's window. They were watching the time. The whole thing was arranged with their accomplice inside. Set a thief to catch a thief: in a minute I had guessed what the whole thing proved to be."

"And you did nothing!" I exclaimed.

"On the contrary, I went downstairs and straight into Lady Melrose's room——"

"You did?"

"Without a moment's hesitation. To save her jewels. And I was prepared to yell as much into her ear trumpet for all the house to hear. But the dear lady is too deaf and too fond of her dinner to wake easily."

"Well?"

"She didn't stir."

"And yet you allowed the professors, as you call them, to take her jewels, case and all!"

"All but this," said Raffles, thrusting his fist into my lap. "I would have shown it you before, but really, old fellow, your face all day has been worth a fortune to the firm!"

And he opened his fist, to shut it next instant on the bunch of diamonds and of sapphires that I had last seen encircling the neck of Lady Melrose.



NOTHING is in reality either pleasant or unpleasant by nature; but all things become such through habit.—*Epictetus*.

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*The Red Badge
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The
Kicking Twelfth

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THE Spitzenberg army was backed by traditions of centuries of victory. In its chronicles, occasional defeats were not printed in italics, but were likely to appear as glorious stands against overwhelming odds. A favorite way to dispose of them was to attribute them frankly to the blunders of the civilian heads of government. This was very good for the army, and probably no army had more self-confidence.

When it was announced that an expeditionary force was to be sent to Rostina to chastise an impudent people, a hundred barrack squares filled with excited men and a hundred sergeant-majors hurried silently through the groups and succeeded in looking as if they were the repositories of the secrets of empire. Officers on leave sped joyfully back to their harness, and recruits were abused with unflagging devotion by every man from colonels to privates of experience.

The Twelfth Regiment of the Line—the Kicking Twelfth—was consumed with a dread that it was not to be included in the expedition, and the regiment formed itself into an informal indignation meeting. Just as they had proved that a great outrage was about to be perpetrated, warning orders arrived to hold themselves in readiness for active service abroad—in Rostina, in fact. The barrack yard was in a flash transformed into a blue-and-buff pandemonium, and the official bugle itself hardly had the power to quell the glad disturbance.

Thus it was that early in the spring the Kicking Twelfth—sixteen hundred men in service equipment—found itself crawling along a road in Rostina. They did not form part of the main force, but belonged to a column of four regiments of foot, two batteries of field guns, a battery of mountain howitzers, a regiment of horse and a company of engineers. Nothing had happened. The

hings

long column had crawled without amusement of any kind through a broad green valley. Big white farmhouses dotted the slopes, but there was no sign of man or beast, and no smoke came from the chimneys. The column was operating from its own base, and its general was expected to form a junction with the main body at a given point.

A squadron of the cavalry was fanned out ahead, scouting, and day by day the trudging infantry watched the blue uniforms of the horsemen as they came and went. Sometimes there would sound the faint thuds of a few shots, but the cavalry was unable to find anything to engage seriously.

The Twelfth had no record of foreign service, and it could hardly be said that it had served as a unit in the great civil war when his majesty the king had whipped the pretender. At that time the regiment had suffered from two opinions. So that it was impossible for either side to depend upon it. Many men had deserted to the standard of the pretender and a number of officers had drawn their swords for him. When the king, a thorough soldier, looked at the remnant he saw that they lacked the spirit to be of great help to him in the tremendous battles which he was waging for his throne. And so this emaciated Twelfth was sent off to a corner of the kingdom to guard a dockyard, where some of the officers so plainly expressed their disapproval of this policy that the regiment received its steadfast name, the Kicking Twelfth.

At the time of which I am writing the Twelfth had a few veteran officers and well-bitten sergeants, but the body of the regiment was composed of men who had never heard a shot fired excepting on the rifle range. But it was an experience for which they longed and with it came the moment for the corps' cry, "Kim up the Kickers"—there was not likely to be a man who would not go tumbling after his leaders.

Young Timothy Lean was a second lieutenant in the first company of the third battalion, and just at this time he was pattering along at the flank of the men, keeping a fatherly lookout for boots that hurt and packs that sagged. He was extremely bored. The mere far-away sound of desultory shooting was not war as he had been led to believe it.

It did not appear that behind that freckled face and under that red hair there was a mind which dreamed of blood. He was not extremely anxious to kill somebody, but he was very fond of soldiering—it had been the career of his father and of his grandfather—and he understood that the profession of arms lost much of its point unless a man shot at people, and had people shoot at him. Strolling in the sun through a practically deserted country might be a proper occupation for a divinity student on a vacation, but the soul of Timothy Lean was in revolt at it. Sometimes in the camp at night he would go morosely to the camp of the cavalry and hear the infant subalterns laughingly exaggerate the comedy side of adventures which they had had when out with small patrols far ahead. Lean would sit and listen in glum silence to these tales, and dislike the young officers—many of them old military-school friends—for having had experience in modern warfare. "Anyhow," he said, savagely, "presently you'll be getting into a lot of trouble, and then the Foot will have to come along and pull you out. We always do. That's history."

"Oh, we can take care of ourselves," said the cavalry, with good-natured understanding of his mood.

But the next day even Lean blessed the cavalry, for excited troopers came whirling back from the front, bending over their speeding horses and shouting wildly and hoarsely for the infantry to clear the way. Men yelled at them from the roadside as courier followed cou-

rier, and from the distance ahead sounded in quick succession six booms from field guns. The information possessed by the couriers was no longer precious. Everybody knew what a battery meant when it spoke. The bugles cried out, and the long column jolted into a halt. Old Colonel Sponge went bouncing in his saddle back to steer the general, and the regiment sat down in the grass by the roadside, and waited in silence. Presently the second squadron of the cavalry trotted off along the road in a cloud of dust, and in due time old Colonel Sponge came bouncing back and palavered his three majors and his adjutant. Then there was a bit more talk by the majors, and gradually through the correct channels spread information, which in due time reached Timothy Lean. The enemy, five thousand strong, occupied a pass at the head of the valley some four miles beyond. They had three batteries well posted. Their infantry was intrenched. The ground in their front was crossed and lined with many ditches and hedges, but the enemy's batteries were so posted that it was doubtful if a ditch would ever prove convenient as shelter for the Spitzenberg infantry. There was a fair position for the Spitzenberg artillery twenty-three hundred yards from the enemy. The cavalry had succeeded in driving the enemy's skirmishers back upon the main body, but of course had only tried to worry them a little. The position was almost inaccessible on the enemy's right, owing to high, steep hills which had been crowned by small parties of infantry. The enemy's left, although guarded by a much larger force, was approachable and might be flanked. This was what the cavalry had to say, and it added briefly a report of two troopers killed and five wounded.

Whereupon, Major-General Richie, commanding a force of seventy-five hundred men of His Majesty of Spitzenberg, set in motion with a few

simple words the machinery which would launch his army at the enemy. The Twelfth understood the orders when they saw the smart young aid approaching old Colonel Sponge, and they rose as one man, apparently afraid that they would be late. There was a clank of accouterments. Men shrugged their shoulders tighter against their packs, and thrusting their thumbs between their belts and their tunics, they wriggled into a closer fit with regard to the heavy ammunition equipment. It is curious to note that almost every man took off his cap and looked contemplatively into it as if to read a maker's name. Then they replaced their caps with great care. There was little talking, and it was not observable that a single soldier handed a token or left a comrade with a message to be delivered in case he should be killed. They did not seem to think of being killed; they seemed absorbed in a desire to know what would happen, and what it would look like when it was happening. Men glanced continually at their officers in a plain desire to be quick to understand the very first order that would be given, and officers looked gravely at their men, measuring them, feeling their temper, worrying about them.

A bugle called; there were sharp cries; and the Kicking Twelfth was off to battle.

The regiment had the right of the line in the infantry brigade, and as the men tramped noisily along the white road every eye was strained ahead, but, after all, there was nothing to be seen but a dozen farms—in short, a countryside. It resembled the scenery in Spitzenberg; every man in the Kicking Twelfth had often confronted a dozen such farms with a composure which amounted to indifference. But still down the road there came galloping troopers, who delivered information to Colonel Sponge and then galloped on. But in time the Twelfth came to the

top of a rise, and below them, on a plain, was the heavy black streak of a Spitzenberg squadron, and back of the squadron loomed the gray bare hill of the Rostina position. There was a little of skirmish firing. The Twelfth reached a knoll which the officers easily recognized as suitable for the Spitzenberg guns. The men swarmed up it in a peculiar formation. They resembled a crowd coming off a race track, but, nevertheless, there were no stray sheep. It is simply that the ground on which actual battles are fought is not like a chessboard. And after them came swinging a six-gun battery, the guns wagging from side to side as the long line turned out of the road, and the drivers using their whips as the leading guns scrambled at the hill. The halted Twelfth lifted its voice and spake amiably but with point to the battery: "Go on, guns! We'll take care of you. Don't be afraid. Give it to them." The teams—lead, swing and wheel—struggled and slipped over the steep and uneven ground, and the gunners, as they clung to their springless positions, wore their usual and natural air of unhappiness. They made no reply to the infantry. Once upon the top of the hill, however, these guns were unlimbered in a flash, and directly the infantry could hear the loud voice of an officer drawling out the time for the fuses. A moment later the first three-point-two bellowed out, and there could be heard the swish and the snarl of a fleeting shell. Colonel Sponge and a number of officers climbed to the battery's position, but the men of the regiment sat in the shelter of the hill like so many blindfolded people and wondered what they would have been able to see if they had been officers. Sometimes the shells of the enemy came sweeping over the top of the hill and burst in great brown explosions in the fields to the rear. The men looked after them and laughed. To the rear could be seen also the moun-

tain battery coming at a comic trot with every man obviously in a deep rage with every mule. If a man can put in long service with a mule battery, and come out of it with an amiable disposition, he should be presented with a medal weighing many ounces. After the mule battery came a long, black, winding thing which was three regiments of Spitzenberg infantry, and back of them and to the right was an inky square, which was the remaining Spitzenberg guns. General Richie and his staff clattered up to the hill. The blindfolded Twelfth sat still. The inky square suddenly became a long racing line. The howitzers joined their little bark to the thunder of the guns on the hill, and the three regiments of infantry came on. The Twelfth sat still.

Of a sudden a bugle rang its warning and the officers shouted. Some used the old cry, "Attention! Kim up the Kickers!" and the Twelfth knew that it had been told to go in. The majority of the men expected to see great things as soon as they rounded the shoulder of the hill, but there was nothing to be seen save a complicated plain and the gray knolls occupied by the enemy. Many company commanders in low voices worked at their men and said things which do not appear in the written reports. They talked soothingly; they talked indignantly; and they talked always like fathers. And the men heard no sentence completely. They heard no specific direction, these wide-eyed men. They understood that there was being delivered some kind of exhortation to do as they had been taught, and they also understood that a superior intelligence was anxious over their behavior and welfare.

There was a great deal of floundering through hedges, a climbing of walls, a jumping of ditches. Curiously original privates try to find new and easier ways for themselves instead of following the men in front of them. Officers had

short fits of fury over these people. The more originality they possessed the more likely they were to become separated from their companies. Colonel Sponge was making an exciting progress on a big charger. When the first faint song of the bullets came from above, the men wondered why he sat so high. The charger seemed as tall as the Eiffel Tower. But if he was high in the air, he had a fine view, and that is supposedly why people ascend the Eiffel Tower. Very often he had been a joke to them, but when they saw this fat old gentleman so coolly treating the strange new missiles which hummed in the air, it struck them suddenly that they had wronged him seriously, and a man who could attain the command of a Spitzenberg regiment was entitled to general respect. And they gave him a sudden quick affection, an affection that would make them follow him heartily, trustfully, grandly—this fat old gentleman seated on a too-big horse. In a flash, his touseled gray head, his short, thick legs, even his paunch had become specially and humorously endeared to them. And this is the way of soldiers.

But still the Twelfth had not yet come to the place where tumbling bodies began their test of the very heart of a regiment. They backed through more hedges, jumped more ditches, slid over more walls. The Rostina artillery had seemed to have been asleep, but suddenly the guns aroused like dogs from their kennels and around the Twelfth there began a wild, swift screeching. There arose cries to hurry, to come on, and as the rifle bullets began to plunge into them, the men saw the high, formidable hills of the enemy's right, and perfectly understood that they were doomed to storm them. The cheering thing was the sudden beginning of a tremendous uproar on the enemy's left.

Every man ran, hard, tense, breathless. When they reached the foot of the hills they thought they had won the

charge already, but they were electrified to see officers above them waving their swords and yelling with anger, surprise and shame. With a long, murmurous outcry, the Twelfth began to climb the hill. And as they went and fell, they could hear frenzied shouts. "Kim up the Kickers." The pace was slow. It was like the rising of a tide. It was determined, almost relentless in its appearance, but it was slow. If a man fell, there was a chance that he would land twenty yards below the point where he was hit. The Kickers crawled, their rifles in their left hands as they pulled and tugged themselves up with their right hands. Ever arose the shout, "Kim up the Kickers." Timothy Lean, his face flaming, his eyes wild, yelled it back as if he was delivering the gospel.

The Kickers came up. The enemy—they had been in small force, thinking the hills safe enough from attack—retreated quickly from this preposterous advance, and not a bayonet in the Twelfth saw blood. Bayonets very seldom do.

The homing of this successful charge wore an unromantic aspect. About twenty windless men suddenly arrived and threw themselves upon the crest of the hill and breathed. And these twenty were joined by others and still others until almost eleven hundred men of the Twelfth lay upon the hilltop. The regiment's track was marked by body after body, in groups and singly. The first officer—perchance, the first man—one never can be certain—the first officer to gain the top of the hill was Timothy Lean, and such was the situation that he had the honor to receive his colonel with a bashful salute.

The regiment knew exactly what it had done. It did not have to wait to be told by the Spitzenberg newspapers. It had taken a formidable position with the loss of about five hundred men, and it knew it. It knew, too, that it was a

great glory for the Kicking Twelfth, and as the men lay rolling on their bellies, they expressed their joy in a wild cry. "Kim up the Kickers." For a moment there was nothing but joy, and then suddenly company commanders were besieged by men who wished to go down the path of the charge and look for their mates. The answers were without the quality of mercy. They were short, snapped quick words: "No; you can't."

The attack on the enemy's left was sounding in great rolling crashes. The shells in their flight through the air made a noise as of red-hot iron plunged into water, and stray bullets nipped near the ears of the Kickers.

The Kickers looked and saw. The battle was below them. The enemy was indicated by a long, noisy line of gossamer smoke, although there could be seen a toy battery with tiny men employed at the guns. All over the field the shrapnel was bursting, making quick bulbs of white smoke. Far away two regiments of Spitzenberg infantry were charging, and at the distance this charge looked like a casual stroll. It appeared that small black groups of men were walking meditatively toward the Rostina intrenchments.

There would have been orders given sooner to the Twelfth, but unfortunately Colonel Sponge arrived on top of the hill without a breath of wind in his body. He could not have given an order to save the regiment from being wiped off the earth. Finally he was able to gasp out something and point at the enemy. Timothy Lean ran along the line yelling to the men to sight at eight hundred yards, and like a slow and ponderous machine, the regiment again went to work. The fire flanked a great part of the enemy's trenches.

It could be said that there were only two prominent points of view expressed by the men after their victorious arrival on the crest. One was defined in

the exulting use of the corps' cry. The other was a grief-stricken murmur which is invariably heard after a hard fight: "My God, we're all cut to pieces!"

Colonel Sponge sat on the ground and impatiently waited for his wind to return. As soon as it did, he arose and cried out, "Form up and we'll charge again! We will win this battle as soon as we can hit them!" The shouts of the officers sounded wild like men yelling on shipboard in a gale. And the obedient Kickers arose for their task. It was running down hill this time. The mob of panting men poured over the stones.

But the enemy had not been at all blind to the great advantage gained by the Twelfth, and they now turned upon them a desperate fire of small arms. Men fell in every imaginable way, and their accouterments rattled on the rocky ground. Some landed with a crash, floored by some tremendous blow others dropped gently down like sacks of meal; with others it would positively appear that some spirit had suddenly seized them by the ankles and jerked their legs from under them. Many officers were down, but Colonel Sponge, stuttering and blowing, was still upright. He was almost the last man in the charge, but not to his shame, rather to his stumpy legs. At one time it seemed that the assault would be lost. The effect of the fire was somewhat as if a terrible cyclone was blowing in the men's faces. They wavered, lowering their heads and shouldering weakly as if it were impossible to make headway against the wind of battle. It was the moment of despair, the moment of the heroism which comes to the chosen of the war god. The colonel's cry broke and screeched absolute hatred. Other officers simply howled, and the men silent, debased, seemed to tighten their muscles for one last effort. Again they pushed against this mysterious power

of the air, and once more the regiment was charging. Timothy Lean, agile and strong, was well in advance, and afterward he reflected that the men who had been nearest to him were an old grizzled sergeant, who would have gone to hell for the honor of the regiment, and a pie-faced lad who had been obliged to lie about his age in order to get into the army.

There was no shock of meeting. The Twelfth came down on a corner of the trenches, and as soon as the enemy had ascertained that the Twelfth was certain to arrive, they scuttled out, running close to the earth and spending no time in glances backward. In these days it is not discreet to wait for a charge to come home. You observe the charge, you attempt to stop it, and if you find that you can't, it is better to retire immediately to some other place. The Rostina soldiers were not heroes, perhaps, but they were men of sense. A maddened and badly frightened mob of Kickers came tumbling into the trench and shot at the backs of fleeing men. And at that very moment the action was won, and won by the Kickers. The enemy's flank was entirely crumpled, and, knowing this, he did not await further and more disastrous information. The Twelfth looked at themselves, and knew that they had a record. They sat down and grinned patronizingly as they saw the batteries galloping to advance positions to shell the retreat, and they really laughed as

the cavalry swept tumultuously forward.

The Twelfth had no more concern with the battle. They had won it, and the subsequent proceedings were only amusing.

There was a call from the flank, and the men wearily came to attention as General Richie and his staff came trotting up. The young general, cold-eyed, stern and grim as a Roman, looked with his straight glance at a hammered and thin and dirty line of figures which was His Majesty's Twelfth Regiment of the Line. When opposite old Colonel Sponge, a pudgy figure standing at attention, the general's face set in still more grim and stern lines. He took off his helmet. "Kim up the Kickers," said he. He replaced his helmet and rode off. Down the cheeks of the little fat colonel rolled tears. He stood like a stone for a long moment, and then wheeled in supreme wrath upon his surprised adjutant. "Delahaye, you damn fool, don't stand there staring like a monkey. Go tell young Lean I want to see him." The adjutant jumped as if he was on springs, and went after Lean. That young officer presented himself directly, his face covered with disgraceful smudges, and he had also torn his breeches. He had never seen the colonel in such a rage. "Lean, you young whelp, you—you're a good boy." And even as the general had turned away from the colonel, the colonel turned away from the lieutenant.



NONE of us but would be worse than kings if subject to the same rascally flattery.—*Montaigne*.



ATTACHMENT to the same thought wearies and destroys the mind of man. Hence, for solidity and permanence of the pleasure of love, it is sometimes necessary not to know that we love; and this is not to be guilty of an infidelity, for we do not therefore love another; it is to regain strength in order to love better.—*Pascal*.

Rafael Sabatini

Author of *Scaramouche*



The FORTUNES OF LAL FAVERSHAM IV. The CHANCELLOR'S DAUGHTER

LONDON were still a festive air. Men rejoiced and drank deep, and "the King" was their toast.

For nine long years had I possessed my soul in patience, waiting in exile for such a time as this, yet now that it was come for me at least it was come too late.

Beset by a grief so poignant that methought I must die of it, sat I in my chamber overlooking King Street. The heart in my breast seemed paralyzed and frozen, and in my hands I held a letter, a ring and a lock of hair.

My Margaret was dead that letter told me. A last pitiable farewell it was from the sweet mistress who for nine years had awaited my return and the Restoration that should mend my fortunes. The ring was one that long ago I had sent to her from France. The lock of hair was cut from her beloved head in the last hour of life.

Loyal and true to her had I been

through that long exile. Jubilantly had I set foot again with Charles upon English soil—my troubles done, methought, and Margaret to be mine at last. And then but a week or so thereafter, when on the point of setting out for Scotland to claim the reward of my long waiting, the inexorable fates had smitten me this cruel blow.

Of the season that followed—when again I sought the company of men—I think with loathing. Headlong I plunged into the wildest excesses of that licentious court.

And thus time and debauchery assuaged my pains, or rather was it that my heart grew numb, and the blood in my veins was turned to gall, for this I know—that when I had ceased to mourn I had also ceased to care for aught that life could give, enduring it with bitter mockery and mimicked mirth.

Yet for all my callousness, it was not

without a pang that I heard from the King, one morning, the proposal that I should wed.

"Your follies, Lal, transcend all bounds," said he, "and we must curb them with the silken bonds of matrimony."

"Sire, I beseech you——" I began.

"There is no cause for that. Already I have thought to your circumstances, and I have found a wife for you. She is not ill-favored, and much courted, a maid of honor to my sister, and what she may lack in beauty she makes up for in endowments."

"But, sire——"

"Have patience, Lal," he laughed, "and you shall learn her name." He took my arm affectionately and drew me into the embrasure of a window that overlooked the river. "Now, sir, what say you to my Lord Chancellor's daughter—*Mistress Hyde*?"

I slowly shook my head.

"Sire, I do not wish to wed."

"Zounds, Sir Lionel!" he exclaimed, a scowl upon his dark face. "You try my patience. Is aught amiss with the lady, or is there some other one whom you prefer?"

"Neither, sire. Yet, an' it please your majesty, I will not wed."

"But it doth not please me," was the testy answer, and I marveled that he should insist thus hotly. "There is no reason in this obstinacy, Sir Lionel. Come, you will think of it at least!"

"I will think of it since you bid me, sire."

"Words, words!" he returned, the frown gathering again. "Let me see you no more until your mind is shaped to my desires—until such a season you are excused your duties near me."

He left me with those words, which plainly told me that I could either wed *Anne Hyde* or take myself away from *Whitehall*. Of such a quality is kingly justice and royal gratitude!

For a day or two I pondered o'er the

matter, keeping it a secret not even shared with *Roger Marston*—of the Duke of York's household—whom during our exile in France I had grown to love as a brother. The King's petulance and insistence were matter for no little wonder in me, albeit to-day I understand this clearly enough.

In the end I determined that sooner than again become a wanderer I would fulfill his wishes. I sought an audience, and told him of my decision, whereat he appeared vastly overjoyed, and bade me set about my wooing.

That very day I came by chance upon *Mistress Hyde* in the *Privy Gardens*. A tall, queenly woman was she, not perchance beautiful, yet with an eye and air that were capable of much. I greeted her courteously and was received with a coldness that argued she already knew me for her suitor. Awhile I paced beside her, and talked of this and that, stupidly enough in all conscience, until at length she stopped in her walk to face me with the question:

"Sir Lionel, know you no better art of wooing than this?"

"I see, madame, that you are informed of the honor to which I aspire," I answered, clumsily.

"Aye, sir, and to which you will aspire in vain."

"Madame," I blurted out, "you relieve me vastly."

Her glance of astonishment was a thing I could have laughed at.

"I do not apprehend you, Sir Lionel," said she at length. "But it signifies little. I have been told to look for your addresses, and that you had gained the King's consent to woo me. I will be frank and save you trouble, sir, by telling you that I love another."

"*Mistress Anne*, I am rejoiced to hear it," I answered, bowing with a touch of mockery. "Do but grant me leave to carry your words to his majesty or do yourself tell him that which you have just told me, and believe me that

Lal Faversham will ever after be your grateful friend."

"I do not understand," she confessed.

"Why, madame, great though the honor be, I do not wish to marry you save inasmuch as I wish to obey his majesty at whose bidding am I come a-wooing. But I can now say to him: Mistress Hyde will have none of me, she loves another—and thus the matter ends. Give you good-day, madame. I go to the King."

"'Twere injudicious to tell his majesty what hath passed betwixt us. You may tell him that your suit prospers none too well, but that you have hope."

"You give me hope? Madame, 'tis to plunge me into despair."

She echoed my laugh, but without mirth, and her glance was not nice, which, after all, is not strange, for albeit a woman loves you not and tells you so, 'tis in her eyes no cause why you should not pine for love of her.

Thus we parted—she to resume her walk, I to carry her lie to the King. It gave him pleasure, and ere three days were sped it was noised about the Court that Lal Faversham wooed the Lord Chancellor's daughter, and that his majesty looked favorably upon the business. On every hand, men spoke to me of it; some openly, and some by hints, till presently I grew sick to death of the very name of Hyde.

One night—a week perchance after the day when first I had presented myself to Mistress Hyde—I sat alone in my lodging at Whitehall, when I was visited by Roger Marston. He was just returned from Devonshire, and the sight of him gave me no little pleasure, for I had grown to dearly love the merry-hearted knave.

'Twas a hot night of early July, and I sat taking the air at my window when he entered. I had not called for lights so that I missed the expression of his face, but his tone warned me that something was amiss, for instead of its

wonted merry note, it rang harsh and petulant. Scarce had he greeted me when:

"What's this I hear, Lal, of your betrothal with Mistress Hyde?" he asked.

"May the devil tan every Hyde that ever bore the name!" I burst out. "If you love me, Roger, you'll talk of something else."

"It is not true, then?"

"Yes, crush me, but it is. True as perdition, and that's the rub! I am bidden by the King to marry Mistress Hyde, or get me out of Whitehall. A week ago I cared not a fig for Mistress Hyde; to-day I hate her as much as I hated the Kirk Commission in the old days."

"And she?" he asked, eagerly.

"Oh, she—she loves another. A man as good and noble as I am dissolute—those are her very words."

"She loves another! Oh, Lal, tell me all."

"Blood and wounds, sir," I gasped, "are you the other one? Oddslife, I should ne'er have guessed it from her description of you."

I told him all that had passed, and albeit it relieved him to find that he had not in me a rival whom the lady favored, yet was he sorely troubled by the King's attitude.

"I care not if it blight my fortunes, Lal," he cried, impetuously, "but Mistress Hyde I'll strive for though a dozen kings oppose me!"

I called for lights, and far into the night we sat talking of Anne Hyde.

Before many days were passed he had given the whole Court cause to talk of her, coupling her name with his, and mine, whose rival he was thought to have become.

The King spoke of the matter to me, and bade me look to my laurels. I answered him with a laugh, that my mind was easy since Mistress Hyde and I understood each other perfectly—which was in all conscience true enough.

That evening had a surprise in store for me. I had left the King's apartments and was going by way of the Privy Gardens to my lodging, when of a sudden a woman's cry greeted me from the opposite end of the Stone Gallery upon which I had just entered. It was followed by a quick patter of feet, and the rustle of a gown, and a moment later a lady was in my arms, in a state of monstrous agitation. It was Mistress Hyde.

"Sir Lionel," she cried, recognizing me and clinging to me for protection. "Mr. Marston hath taken leave of his senses."

Not five paces away stood Roger, who had followed her—his young face flushed and angry.

"If I have gone mad, madame, the fault is yours," he cried passionately. "Am I a toy or a buffoon that you should use me so? Aye, cling to your protector—to your lover," he added, anger blinding him to all sense of fitness and to all reason. "Cling to your lover, madame, and laugh together at the poor fool you have made a mock of. But there is a proverb touching him who laughs last. As God lives, madame, I will have a reckoning, and if you find the payment heavy, Mistress Hyde, remember that heavy also is the debt."

"Who dares to threaten Mistress Hyde?" came a loud voice behind us.

"Who presumes to ask Roger Marston what he dare?" was the lad's proud answer, and he boldly eyed the three men who came up, for all that I doubt not he had recognized the voice of the Duke of York.

"Doth a gentleman of my household speak to me of presumption?"

For a moment Roger's face wore an odd look that made me tremble for him. Then, mastering himself betimes he bowed.

"Your royal highness sees perchance something of my condition," he said, in a low voice that still shook with pas-

sion. "At another time, if you will permit me, I will explain."

"That explanation, sir, I shall demand to-morrow," was the cold rejoinder. "Mistress Hyde, permit me to reconduct you."

He moved away with her, followed at a respectful distance by the two gentlemen who attended him. At length I made shift to follow them, but before I had gone two paces Roger was at my elbow.

"A word with you, sir," he exclaimed, so loud that the duke's attendants heard him and paused to listen.

"Not now, Roger," I answered, calmly. "We have an audience. In an hour's time at the Horseshoe in Drury Lane."

"As you please," he assented curtly, and we went our ways.

It was striking nine as my chair was set down at the door of the Horseshoe tavern, and I alighted. I called for a cup of canary and inquired of the landlord whether Mr. Marston had arrived. He informed me in answer that Roger had come to the hostelry half an hour ago, but that soon after his arrival a boy had brought him a letter upon reading which he had again gone forth. I stayed a while in the house, then, seeing that Roger came not, and having dismissed my chair, I set out to walk back to Whitehall. The evening was a fine one, and I strolled slowly along, so that it was after ten before I had regained my apartments.

Next morning Killigrew was regaling the Court with a monstrous story touching Anne Hyde and Roger Marston. The gallant Roger, mad with love, had sought, he had it, to snatch a kiss from Mistress Hyde in the Privy Gardens, whereupon she had flown to the arms of Lal Faversham, and Faversham had not only protected his betrothed, but, athirst for vengeance, he had spent the night hunting in London for the man

who had offended her. 'Twas a vile fabrication from end to end.

The Duke of York asked me if I knew aught of Roger's whereabouts; to which I naturally replied that I did not, I had not seen him since we parted in the Stone Gallery the night before.

Later in the day there were strange rumors afloat. Roger Marston, it was said, had disappeared. And when presently I learned that his hat and cloak and broken sword had been found on Tower Wharf, I was filled with vague uneasiness.

It was not until the morrow, however, that this uneasiness of mine had cause to take a definite shape. I was in attendance upon his majesty in the banquetting house during the morning, when the Lord Chancellor entered and approached the King. They stood apart in conversation for some moments, and I observed that Hyde handed something to Charles which the latter examined closely. He returned to my side presently, and stood chatting easily with me for some moments, then dismissed me. But as I was on the point of leaving the apartment he called me back and pointed to a handkerchief that lay upon the floor.

"You have dropped something, Lal."

I turned, and retracing my steps lifted the kerchief, on a corner of which was embroidered the Faversham eagle. Thanking him, I pocketed it, wondering abstractedly that it was so curiously soiled, and again I made shift to go. But again he called me back—this time in a cold, imperious voice.

"Sir Lionel."

"Sire?"

"You are certain that that kerchief belongs to you."

I pulled it forth again, and again I examined it—unquestionably the thing was mine. I told him so, asking myself what cause there might be for so much ado about a piece of cambric.

"Know you were you let it fall?" he asked, severely.

"Why even now, sire, upon this very floor."

"Not so, Sir Lionel. 'Twas I who cast it there. It was brought me awhile ago by my Lord Chancellor. It was found where the pieces of Roger Marston's sword were found—on Thames Wharf. How came it there, sir? Unriddle me that."

I looked askance from him to those about him, and that frown of his reflected upon every face, turned me cold with apprehension. I guessed the thing that was in their minds.

"Oh, sire!" I cried. "You do not accuse me of this?"

"Of what, sir? I have accused you of nothing. 'Tis your conscience and that kerchief that accuse you. Sir George," he added, turning to Etheredge, "be good enough to call the guard."

"But your majesty——"

He silenced me by a lofty wave of the hand.

"Anon the matter shall be sifted. In the meantime, Sir Lionel, you shall remain a prisoner in your own apartments."

They that have a king for friend lack not for enemies, and the downfall of Lal Faversham was cause, I doubt not, for more joy than sorrow.

Clearly, I saw that whether Roger were dead or living I was the victim of some foul plot whose depth and purport I could not measure. I had been heard make an assignation with Roger Marston on the night of the scene with Mistress Hyde. It was known that I had sought him and there were none to prove that I had not found him.

In my chamber I was left alone, a sentry at my door night and day, and another beneath my windows in King Street. Communication of any kind was interdicted, and I saw no one until toward the evening of the third day, when I was visited by Dick Talbot. He

came from the King to tell me that his majesty would himself look into the affair upon the following morning. Dick Talbot was my friend—one of those who had shared my exile. I swore to him by my honor that I was innocent and ignorant alike of Roger Marston's fate, and he believed me. He cheered me with the news that after all his majesty was favorably disposed toward me, and with a parting word of encouragement he would have left me when of a sudden we were startled by a noisy altercation outside my door.

Some one remonstrated with the sentry, demanding admittance, and the loud, angry voice made my nerves tingle with excitement.

"Dick," I cried, "'tis Roger Marston's voice!"

In a bound, Talbot had crossed and hidden the sentry stand aside; a second later the man of whose murder I was accused appeared in the doorway. He came hatless and disheveled; his face was white and haggard, and there was a bruise over his right eye, his clothes were soiled and disordered, and in the shoulder of his Camlett coat gaped a great rent. Still he it was, and with a shout of joy and relief I sprang to greet him. But he met my gladness coldly and with a scowl.

"Back, you hound—you hypocrite!" he thundered.

"Are you mad, Roger?" I gasped, and to such a cause indeed I assigned for the moment his disordered looks.

"Mad?" he echoed, with a contemptuous laugh. "No, no, I am sane enough, friend Lionel."

"Then why greet me in this fashion—me who am accused of your murder, and lying here under arrest for it?"

"And fitly so, for, crush me, 'tis no fault of yours that I am not murdered; though, perchance, it had been better for you had your assassins done their work outright."

"My assassins? I swear by my

honor, Roger, that I know not to what you allude."

"Oddslife, will you deny that you sent me a letter to the Horseshoe, bidding me come to you at the Red Lion in Thames Street? Dare you deny that at Tower Wharf your ruffians fell upon me, stunned me and carried me off to a house in Seething Lane, whence I have just made my escape at the risk of a broken neck?"

"I do deny it, all of it. Where is the letter?"

He gave me a glance of ineffable contempt, then handed a piece of paper to Talbot.

"Read that, sir," he said, "then let its author see it again."

"You must not forget, Mr. Marston," said Talbot quietly, after he had glanced at the paper and passed it on to me, "that such a document may easily be forged. I have known Lal Faversham these many years, Mr. Marston, for a gentleman. A gentleman, sir, does not do these things, particularly when his swordsmanship is of the quality of Sir Lionel's. Bethink you, sir, that had he desired to rid himself of you, he had no need to employ such means."

"Thank you, Talbot," I said, then turning to the boy who stood livid with anger at this fresh opposition—"Roger, this letter is forged, I swear it. Be assured by this and Mr. Talbot's reasoning."

"I care not a fig for your lies or Mr. Talbot's reasoning," was the passionate answer.

"Roger!"

"Oh, have done this farce," he returned, with a bitter laugh. "What of your protestations that you did but woo Mistress Hyde because the King had bidden you—that you cared no whit for her nor she for you? Did not her action in the Stone Gallery prove that you had lied?"

"Mr. Marston," put in Talbot calmly,

"your purpose here is clear, but I entreat you let this affair be conducted with decency. Sir Lionel is no longer under arrest—at least, he will not be when I have told the King that I have seen you. Let me prevail upon you to withdraw and send a friend to wait upon a friend of Sir Lionel's."

"No, no, Talbot," I cried. "The boy is beside himself. Surely we can bring him to see reason. Remember, Roger, how long I have been your friend."

"Such a friend as was the Iscariot," he retorted, at which fresh insult I lost all patience.

"Dick," I said, with a shrug, "since he will have it so, perhaps, you will do me the honor of arranging this affair."

I withdrew into the adjoining room, and an hour later I was informed by Talbot that we were to meet at Rosamond's Pond in St. James' Park, at six o'clock next morning. The sentry was removed from my door, and my sword returned to me.

Albeit it wanted still a few minutes to six on that glorious July morning, when Talbot and I reached Rosamond's Pond, we found Roger Marston with his friend, Lord Falmouth, already pacing 'neath the trees. There was little said, and we made ready swiftly. Our swords were measured, and we faced each other. Then, at my request, Talbot made a last appeal to Roger, but the lad was beyond reason, and we crossed swords—I, reluctantly and sadly, he, with an eagerness that proved how deep was his resentment.

I was determined not to hurt the lad, despite the affront he had put upon me, and in this purpose I went to work. For what he lacked in skill he made up in fury, and for some moments he kept me busy enough. But in the end came a favorable opportunity and ere he well knew what had befallen him, I had twisted the sword from his grasp, and sent it flying over his head.

"Will that suffice you, Roger, in rep-

aration for your fancied grievance, and will you listen to me now?"

"I will hear naught from you. Kill me disarmed if you will, if you will not, let my sword be returned to me."

I bowed my head, and a moment or two later we were at work again. Seeing how little it availed me to disarm him, I was now intent upon getting my sword home in his sword-arm, and thus by a slight wound disabling him. Calmly I fenced, and waited. And then of a sudden, whilst my eyes were intent upon my opponent, there came a ringing clash, and our swords were knocked up by Lord Falmouth.

"Gentlemen," he cried, in alarm, "the King!"

And truly enough, as I turned, I beheld Charles advancing toward us by great strides of his long legs. He came unattended, and his swart face wore a look that was monstrous ugly.

"How is this, gentlemen?" was his angry greeting. "Do I find you with drawn swords in the very grounds of my park? Are you so eager, Sir Lionel, to give truth to the accusation so lately brought against you of having caused the death of Mr. Marston?"

"This quarrel, sir, is none of my seeking," I replied, boldly. "I was visited yesternight by Mr. Marston, who came to accuse me of having caused the abduction whereof he has been the victim. To my denial of the imputation he answered that I lied."

Charles turned to him.

"If I pledge you my kingly word that I am convinced Sir Lionel had no hand in that affair—that, in fact, as I have since discovered, it was a plot rather against him than against you—will that satisfy you, Mr. Marston?"

"So far as that affair is concerned it must perforce, sire. But Sir Lionel and I have another cause of quarrel that is at the root of this one."

"What is this cause?"

"Mistress Hyde, sire," I ventured.

"Mistress Hyde!" he blazed, turning upon Marston. "What is Mistress Hyde to you?"

"I love her, sire."

"Why, so I have heard, and that she loves you not, therefore let the matter end. Oddsfish! I am sick of this business, and Sir Lionel shall marry her this very day if I have any power in England. Don your doubtlets, gentlemen, and attend me. I charge you both upon the pain of my lasting displeasure to let this matter go no further."

We did his bidding, and a sad procession we formed as we crossed the park in the direction of Whitehall. Roger gnawed his lip and wore the look of a newly birched schoolboy, Talbot and Falmouth followed crestfallen at the loss of a morning's sport, while I stalked alone, the saddest of the melancholy party. In my heart I cursed Roger devoutly, and blamed his mawkish love-sickness for having so precipitated matters that I was compelled to wed a woman who—at the thought of it—grew loathsome to me.

But that morning was rich in surprises. We were all but out of the park when in amazement our steps were arrested by no less a sight than that of Mistress Hyde and the Duke of York strolling toward us arm in arm, and all absorbed in the contemplation of each other. For a moment we paused, then, with a vigorous oath, Charles strode forward with quickened step, we following upon his heels. They stood still upon beholding him, and Mistress Hyde let fly a little cry of fear.

A hundred rumors touching Anne Hyde and James of York, that I had heard but left unheeded, holding it mere court scandal, recurred to me at that moment. Then as in a flash I understood why Charles sought to wed me to the Chancellor's daughter. He sought to place her beyond his brother's reach.

Out of deference we paused, unwilling to intrude upon the scene we saw was imminent, and so I missed the greeting that passed between the royal brothers, and which I take it had little that was brotherly. They controlled a while their voices, but at length a loud, mocking laugh burst from the King, who, turning, bade us approach. As we drew near I caught the words from Charles:

"By gad, James, it shall take place to-day."

"Sire," replied the duke, "it is too late. There is no Mistress Hyde to give in marriage." Then taking her by the hand, and bending upon her a look of eloquent affection: "Let me present to your majesty, and to you, gentlemen, her royal highness, the Duchess of York."

Scarce believing our ears, we stood by and heard the gasp that escaped the King.

"James, 'tis false!" he cried.

"Nay, sire, 'tis true. We have been wed these three months."

There was an ominous pause.

Then realizing that this was now become a family affair, Charles dismissed us by a wave of the hand, and we—but too glad to escape from so trying a scene—made off to my lodging.

As we mounted the stairs Roger gripped my hand.

"Forgive me, Lal," he murmured, brokenly. "We have both been duped."

We had indeed, for it was now clear to both of us, that Roger's abduction was the work of the duke, as also was the raising of suspicions against me, with the connivance—as I afterward ascertained—of her father who was privy to the marriage. In this fashion he had sought to remove the two suitors whose liberty was a menace to the secret which in the end he had been forced to disclose—thanks to the King's early rising.

The Foretaste



THERE being no manner of doubt that the most delectable thing in the world is a charming woman, and reflecting that mystery is one of her delights, it occurred to us that an echo, at least, of her lovely thunder might be stolen. It was our notion that since a tinge of the enigmatic adorns woman so effectively, it might also be made to embellish other things—a story, for instance. Accordingly we selected an eminent story. We bereft it of its title and the name of its author and presented it to our readers incognito in the December number of *AINSLIE'S*. The result was an astonishing burst of interest and a deluge of commendation. No other story appearing in these pages within our memory has evoked such a response.

There were rewards involved, it is true. But the enthusiastic tenor of the letters entered for *The Book Lovers' Tournament* was clearly the effect of warm impulse and had very little to do with cold calculation. Very few of those who have written us about the anonymous story, we are sure, considered the prize offerings as anything more than an invitation to voice their approval of the *Tournament* idea and to record in black and white their critical reactions to the story.

* * *

THE first *Book Lovers' contest* closed on December 10th, yet comments continued sifting in for another fortnight. Here is an interesting exhibit from an enthusiast who subscribes herself "*Critica*" and writes from Palo Alto, under date of December 15th:

I had just as lief there were no prizes offered in *The Book Lovers' Tournament*.

To my perverse way of thinking they are incidental, perhaps even impertinent. And to prove my sincerity I have waited until the contest closed before applauding the idea of an anonymous story.

You do me a service for which I am most grateful in presenting a work of reputed merit divorced from any mark of classical identification. I have often wondered what would happen to vast sections of standard literature if for a generation we lost all memory of Who had written What and were obliged to do our reading without any clue to the paternity of books and with no standard for the measurement of literary merit other than native taste. It seems to me that if such a thing came to pass much of the writing we now swallow in faith and digest in discomfort would be struck from the menu.

I don't know yet who wrote the anonymous story in your December issue. But I do know what I think of the story, and it is very satisfying to reflect that my opinion is quite my own and not in the least a reflection of critical verdicts and traditional esteem.

Frankly, I detest the story of *Monsieur Lantin* and by the same token I disapprove its author most cordially. Quite possibly he will turn out to be a man—surely no woman wrote that story—for whose work I have had a fancied admiration, simply because it is generally assumed to be admirable. If this proves the case, I shall be doubly thankful to you for rescuing me from error and revealing to me my own state of mind with respect to a gilded villain. Show me the Master who wrote that venomous tale; were he ten times a Master to all the world, he's no Master to me henceforth—nothing but a Grub Street viper, cold, cruel, and unconvincing. I shall know how to treat him in future, no matter who says he's a genius. I hope his name is Balzac, for I have always wished, and never dared, to hate that man.

Do continue the anonymous stories. Through them you are giving me a very welcome opportunity to think for myself about matters touching which, I'm afraid, my thinking has frequently been done for me in advance.

P. S. I do hope it's Balzac!

THE truth, in Critica's case, must be brutal. It was not, as she so ardently hopes, Balzac who wrote the cruel comedy of Monsieur Lantin, but Guy de Maupassant.

In its English version the story has been variously named by translators. For the purposes of the Book Lovers' Tournament any title which accurately conveyed into English the spirit of the original French, "Les Bijoux," was deemed eligible. The French title was also accepted. Among the titles submitted, five eligible versions predominated—"Les Bijoux," "The Jewels," "The Gems," "The False Jewels," "The False Gems." * * *

FIRST place and the prize of fifty dollars in the Book Lovers' Tournament of December were won by the letter reproduced below, which was ranked slightly above all other competitors not only because it is unusually interesting as a critical document but because it fulfills very clearly and completely all the terms of the contest and avoids consideration of irrelevancies.

THE WINNING LETTER

November 14, 1925.

Editor, AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

The "Mystery Story" in the December AINSLEE's is "The False Gems," by Henri René Albert Guy de Maupassant—and before going any farther into the details of discovery, I think I can answer your question, "How fully does the style betray the author?" by saying, "Style is everything." It was by the style of the story that I first scented Maupassant; the plot went further to establish him as the author, for I had a faint remembrance of it—probably by association with that other story of jewels and jewel of stories, "The Necklace."

To explain the style? That is a different matter. But every one who has read De Maupassant knows that perfect choice of words, that swift approach to the heart of the story, that masterful handling of character and situation to produce the climax, and the swift close with its little turn of pity or of light-hearted cynicism—often of the two blended—at the end. Given merely the introduction to one of De Maupassant's stories,

wouldn't the reader who was reasonably familiar with his work feel instinctively that it might be his? Given the crisis with it, wouldn't his judgment be all the more strongly confirmed? And, given the story entire, with De Maupassant's ending, wouldn't he feel so strong a sense of recognition that he would instinctively turn to De Maupassant's works to confirm it?

I have intimated that my first definite recollection of having read the story before came after I had penetrated far enough into the plot to arrive at the main plot circumstance—the passion of Monsieur Lantin's wife for false jewelry. My first floundering, in the opening paragraphs, had gradually centered on De Maupassant; the arrival of the motive strengthened my intuition—perhaps not quite logically—by its similarity to that of "The Necklace." It did not take much further reading of the story to convince me that I was already familiar with the plot. In my catalogue of De Maupassant's work I found the title, "The False Gems." I knew that I had found it; a glance at the story itself in my edition confirmed my knowledge and made it complete.

So it was by the style that I became first aware of the author, but by the plot that I ultimately came to recognize the story itself. This may sound ridiculously obvious on the face of it, but it really is not. What I mean is that long before I came to the point where the plot structure led me to the title I was conscious of a subtle sense of recognition of it.

You will realize that this all happened *after* I had really discovered the author and the title. It was a sort of reversed process of memory—memory which had to be definitely reminded and stirred before it could become active. But the point is that the one quality of the story which stood out in my mind—faintly, it is true, after the years that had passed since my first reading of it—was the plot—the theme. I was forced to conclude that the chief and most enduring excellence lay here. The sharp, brilliantly illuminating presentation of Lantin and the girl who was to become his wife; the vivid picture of the first six years of their married life, compressed into a paragraph; the subtle introduction of the wife's weakness for cheap jewelry that was later to furnish the foundation for the crisis—these all go into the making of the story. They are typically De Maupassant; they occur, in their method, in scores of other stories from his pen. But it is by the theme that "The False Gems" stands out with the best of his works. I can imagine Monsieur Lantin during those happy years while his wife lived. I can see him fondly

condoning her passion for cheap jewelry—such "bohemian tastes," but, after all, quite innocent—passing over, because of his love for her, what was actually repugnant to him. I can pity him in his sorrow at her death; and sympathize with the reverence for her memory that led him to enshrine everything that had been hers—until the wolf creeps up to his lonely door, and, forced to sell something, he instinctively chooses that which had been most distasteful to him. Up to that point I am in complete harmony with Monsieur Lantin; I walk beside him, I feel very friendly toward him. Then the blow falls. The jewels are not false! They are worth thousands of francs. I am amazed, stunned. I have stepped into Monsieur Lantin's place! The blow has fallen on me!

Art? Yes. But the real art is to follow. I am at a loss what to do; I suddenly discover that I need not worry, that it is only a yarn. But I am wildly curious to know what Lantin will do. Nothing! He simply lives on, as he must, and because he must live he cashes the jewels which no longer mean anything to him but a curse. He builds his life anew on the foundation of that fortune, drowning the bitterness of his memories in increasing boasting as to the size of his heritage.

And then? "Six months later he married again. His second wife was absolutely virtuous, but of an exacting nature. She made him suffer a great deal." How he must have regretted the old happy days! Perhaps the first Madame Lantin wasn't quite virtuous—but how he must have wanted her in spite of all her imperfections.

Yes, I think "The False Gems" ranks with De Maupassant's best—and De Maupassant ranks with the world's best.

Yours, in appreciation for a very pleasant evening.

MARTIN A. SMITH.

Pen Argyl, Pa.

* * *

THERE were ten runners-up to each of whom a check for five dollars has been sent. Their entries were

scarcely distinguishable in point of excellence. No attempt is made therefore to assign an order of relative merit and their names are listed alphabetically. They are:

Mrs. Pearl R. Bramel, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Miss Marjorie Dent Candee, New York, N. Y.

Miss Helen M. Hillard, E. E., Pittsburgh, Pa.

Mrs. Ruth R. Keep, Lowell, Mass.

Miss Gladys Keown, Portland, Ore.

Mrs. James Massie, New York, N. Y.

Doctor L. K. Poyntz, Portland, Ore.

Mrs. Francis G. Ravenel, Charleston, S. C.

Miss Marie Seidell, San Francisco, Calif.

Miss Elizabeth Wilson, Macon, Ga.

* * *

IN AINSLEE'S FOR MARCH

THE complete novel will be "A Lost Lady," by Willa Cather.

There will be seven short stories:

"Ali Rodolphe," by Henri Murger.

"The Token," by May Sinclair.

"Bread Upon the Waters," by Michael Sadleir.

"Le Premier Pas," by E. W. Hornung.

"The Box Tunnel," by Charles Reade.

"The Coming of Spring," by Channing Pollock.

"Carolus and Caroline," by Rafael Sabatini.

The second installment of Margaret Kennedy's extraordinary novel, "The Constant Nymph," will be provided with a synopsis of earlier chapters for the benefit of newcomers.

There will be another Book Lovers' Tournament presenting another anonymous masterpiece.

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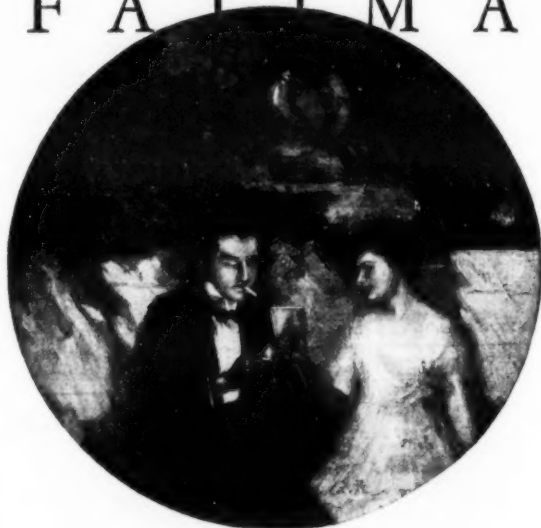
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